

Logistics

Nov 70 ER IM 70-170, Recent Communist Logistical Developments In Southern Laos And Cambodia , Copy 116

Dec 70 ER IM 70-190, Communists Launch Dry Season Resupply Campaign In Southern Laos And Cambodia, Copy 6

Feb 71 ER IM 71-21, Stepped-Up Communist Resupply Campaign In Southern Laos And Cambodia, Copy 15

Feb 71 ER IM 71-25, The Growth And Current Deployment Of The Laotian-Based 559th Transportation Group, Copy 12

Mar 71 ER IM 71-44, The Ho Chi Minh Trail, Copy 11

Mar 71 ER IM 71-41, Logistic Developments In The Laos Panhandle Since The Initiation Of Operation Lam Son 719, Copy 9

25X1 Attachments: [] Maj. Gen Stewart (DIA) memo, dated 8 Mar 71, re Transmittal of ER IM 71-41, March 1971

25X1 [] DCI memo, dated 5 Mar 71, re Memorandum on Logistic Activity in South Laos (forwarding ER IM 71-41)

25X1 [] Memo for Record, dated 9 Mar 71, re IM 71-41 (refusal to provide General Ratkovich with copy of IM 71-41, suggesting he get it through one of the three recipients outside of CIA)

25X1

9 March 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: IM 71-41 Logistic Developments In The Laos
Panhandle Since The Initiation Of Operation
Lam Son 719, March 1971.

1. In response to a request from one Sergeant
Holiday for a copy of subject report for General
Ratkovich I advised him as follows as per Mr. Helms
instruction relayed via :

Mr. Helms was keeping this type of reporting
very closely restricted for the duration of
Operation Lam Son 719. Subject report had gone
outside the Agency in five copies, three of them to
the Pentagon -- to Secretary Laird, Deputy Secretary
Packard and Admiral Moorer. If the General wanted
a copy of the report he would have to request it
from one of these recipients. I told the Sergeant
that we were sure the General would appreciate
Mr. Helms' desire not to give these reports wide
dissemination during this sensitive period while
the LS operations were still in process.

Deputy Director
Economic Research

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Distribution List

Copy 1	Richard Helms
2	Henry Kissinger
3	Melvin Laird
4	David Packard
5	Admiral Moorer
6	Alexis Johnson
7	DDCI
8	ADDI
9	DD/OER
10	SAVA

5 March 1971

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12

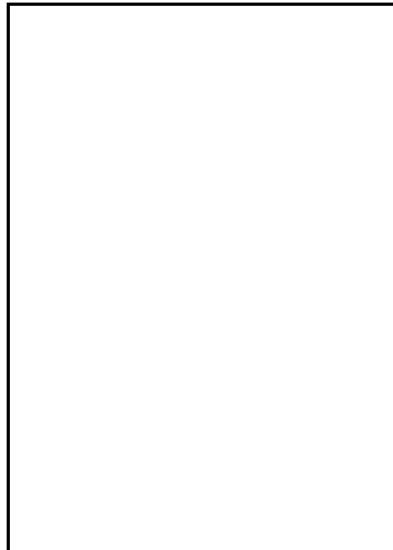
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17-25



8 March 1971

8 March 1971

- 8 March 1971

8 March 1971

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5 March 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH : Acting Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : Memorandum on Logistic Activity in south Laos

1. On 22 February you provided Dr. Kissinger at his request a review of logistic activities in south Laos. The attachment is an update of that study prepared on the basis of information available to us as of 1200 hours today.

2. I have prepared transmittal notes to Dr. Kissinger and your WSAG associates in the event you wish to disseminate this report.

[Redacted]
Deputy Director
Economic Research

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Attachments
SC-02383/71 Cy
Transmittal Notes

Distribution:
Cy 1 & 2 - Addressee w/att
3 - DDCI w/att [Redacted]
4 - ADDI w/att
5 - DD/OER w/o att

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GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

MEMORANDUM FOR: George Carver

Attached is OER's latest evaluation of logistics activity in South Laos.

[Redacted]
Deputy Director
Economic Research

Attachment:

[Redacted] Copy 10

(DATE)

(over)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

(47)

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
Assistant to the President
for National Security
Affairs
White House

The attached memorandum is our latest evaluation of enemy logistics activity in south Laos. It is an update of a similar study transmitted to you on 22 February.

Richard Helms

[Redacted]
Copy No. 2

(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

(47)

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Melvin Laird
The Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense

Attached for your information is
our latest evaluation of enemy logistics
activity in south Laos.

Richard Helms

Copy No. 3

(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

(47)

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable David Packard
Deputy Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense

Attached for your information is
our latest evaluation of enemy logistics
activity in south Laos.

Richard Helms

Copy No. 4

(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

(47)

MEMORANDUM FOR: Admiral Thomas H. Moorer
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of
Staff
Department of Defense

Attached for your information is
our latest evaluation of enemy logistics
activity in south Laos.

Richard Helms

Copy No. 5

(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

(47)

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Hon U. Alexis Johnson
Under Secretary for
Political Affairs
Department of State

Attached for your information is our
latest evaluation of enemy logistics
activity in south Laos.

Richard Helms

Copy N. 6

(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
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Approved For Release 2006/03/06 : CIA-RDP78T02095R000400030001-2

8 March 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Major General Richard Stewart
Asst. Director for Intelligence
Production
Defense Intelligence Agency

SUBJECT : Transmittal of ER IM 71-41,
March 1971

Attached for your information is a copy of
our latest rack-up of the logistic developments in
south Laos. This was prepared for the Director and
given very limited distribution.

Deputy Director
Economic Research

Attachment:
Logistic Developments In The
Laos Panhandle Since The
Initiation of Operation
Lam Son 719, Cy 16,

Distribution:
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1 - DD/OER

OD/OER/ (8 Mar 71)

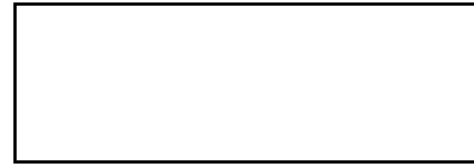
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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

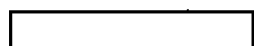
MORI this IM pages 11-26

Intelligence Memorandum

*Logistic Developments In The Laos Panhandle Since The Initiation
Of Operation Lam Son 719*

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ER IM 71-41
March 1971



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
March 1971

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Logistic Developments In The Laos
Panhandle Since The Initiation
Of Operation Lam Son 719

Introduction

This memorandum is the second in a series analyzing logistical developments in the Laos Panhandle since the initiation of Operation Lam Son 719. Our first memorandum reviewed the situation through 21 February.* This analysis focuses on events since that date but refers, when necessary for better perspective and understanding of logistic operations, to events reported previously.

Areas of Disruption

1. Operation Lam Son 719 has clearly caused the Communists numerous logistical difficulties in roughly a 450-square-mile area bounded by Route 926 on the south, the Se Bang Hieng river on the north, the Laos/South Vietnam border on the east, and a line some seven miles to the east of Tchepone. Route 92, one of the north-south arteries of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, was interdicted along several segments early in Lam Son 719 and

* CIA. [] Current Status Of Logistics Activity In The Laos Panhandle, 22 February 1971, []

Note: This memorandum was prepared by the Office of Economic Research and coordinated within the Directorate of Intelligence.

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since 20 February has reflected no sensor detections. [REDACTED]

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As late as 28 February, units of two antiaircraft regiments [REDACTED] were having maintenance problems, a rice shortage, and a shortage of vehicle drivers.

2. [REDACTED]

One unit had to return to Muong Nong on 15 February because of "obstruction" on Route 926, an access route into South Vietnam. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] difficulties in the transfer of cargo to Communist combat forces by Rear Service units in areas along Routes 92C, 92D, and 922. Binh Tram 41 elements which recently relocated from the Muong Nong area to the area adjacent to Binh Tram 33 also were having resupply problems. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] some units were out of provisions, low on medical supplies, and short of oil and gasoline for bulldozers and prime movers.

3. During the period 25 February to 1 March an onslaught of unseasonable torrential rains made many of the roads so wet and slippery that traffic levels declined significantly. Reports of localized POL shortages also had an impeding effect on some logistic activity, particularly with some units involved in the second phase of the "general offensive" in the Muong Nong area. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the POL section of Binh Tram 34 indicated that gasoline and oil was being shipped on a priority basis to transportation units operating there. As a result the amounts of gasoline for other elements of Binh Tram 34 were limited. As late as 4 March, some units subordinate to Binh Tram 33 reported that they were running short of ammunition as a result of combat with the enemy.

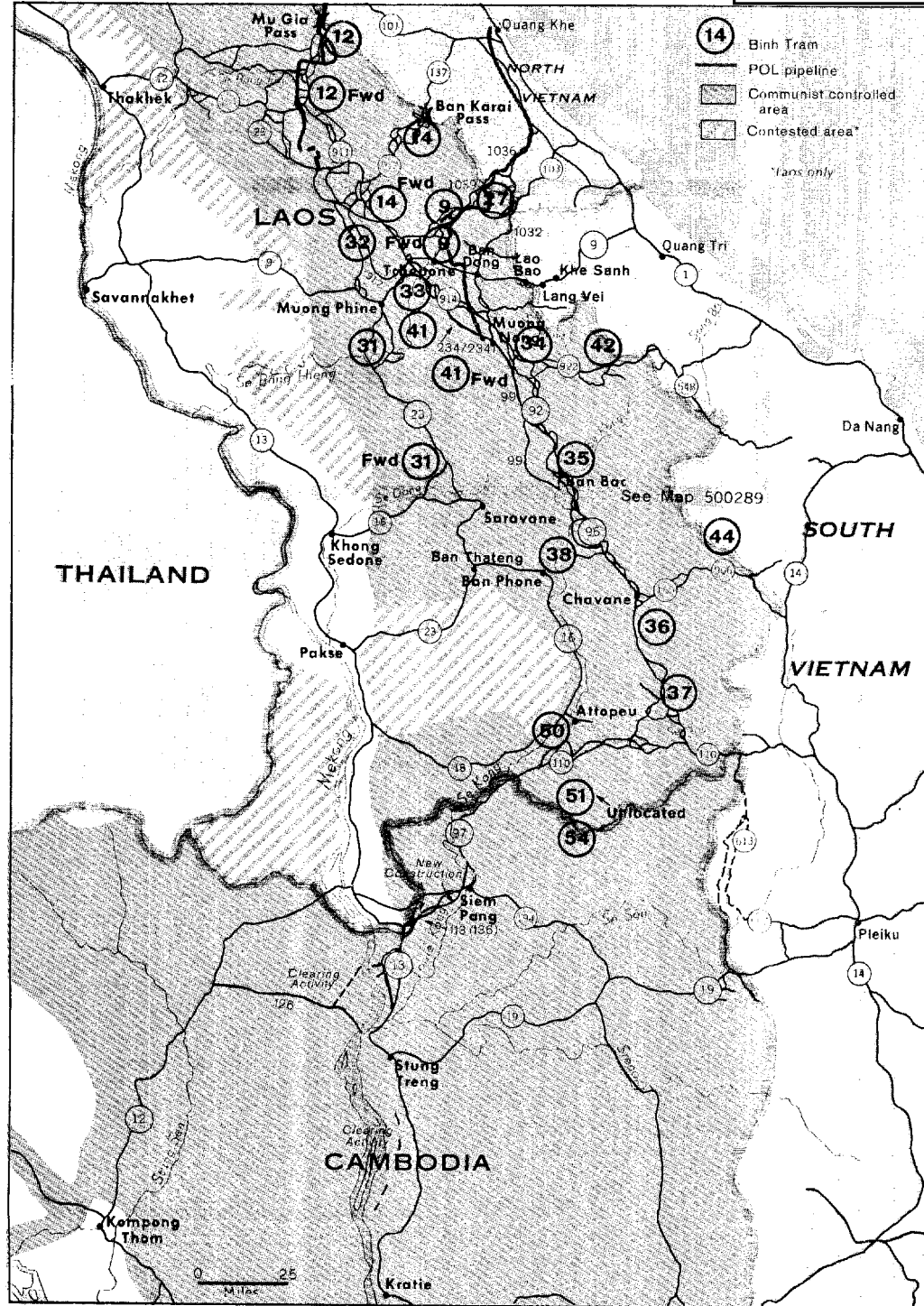
4. Despite these problems the overall disruptive effects seem to be relatively short lived and localized. As will be discussed below, traffic levels by 3 March had returned close to the high levels noted during the February crash offensive. The enemy seems to be maintaining a heavy southward flow of supplies. [REDACTED]

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Communist Logistical System in Southern Laos and Cambodia

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[redacted] four major logistic entities -- Binh Trams 27, 34, 35, and 53 -- had achieved high degrees of efficiency in the second phase of the transportation offensive. The reference to Binh Tram 53 is notable because of its probable location in northern Cambodia. [redacted]

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The Pattern of Traffic

Input Roads

5. Sensors reflected high levels of traffic on the major input corridors since the start of the "crash" program on 7 February to 24 February when torrential rains hit the Panhandle, temporarily hindering logistic activity. Throughout this period, all three input corridors showed high levels of activity, Ban Karai Pass reflecting the heaviest traffic. Further north at Mu Gia Pass, detections increased after 14 February, reversing the decline apparent there in previous weeks. Shortly after the start of Lam Son 719 it became evident [redacted] that input through the western DMZ was being used in support of enemy security and logistic forces in the Binh Tram 9 and 27 areas, and more recently for movement to the Headquarters elements of Binh Tram 41 south of Tchepone near Binh Tram 33.

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6. Aerial observers corroborate sensor detections on input traffic. Heavy traffic flows on the entry corridors,* which were under way when Lam Son 719 began, continued through the end of February, according to FACs. To counter recent concentrated bombing of several target areas in the Ban Karai Pass, the enemy has nearly completed

* *Photography of North Vietnamese Routes 15 and 137 leading to the Laos border continues to reflect large vehicle counts and large quantities of supplies cached along each of the routes. For example, photographic coverage of Route 15 dated 18 February revealed nearly 100 trucks along the road within 10 miles of the border crossing point. The following day, coverage of Route 137 showed 115 trucks (five towing probable 100-mm weapons). Photography of 1 March reflected "numerous" vehicles and personnel on these routes.*

a new road bypassing the heavily bombed area. According to pilots, all roads in the western DMZ corridor (excluding Route 1032B) sustained heavy truck traffic through the end of February. In this area, pilots also reported that Route 9110 has been receiving increasing truck traffic. This connector route links the cross-border access routes (Routes 1039, 1038, 1035, and 92A) with the north-south route structure, and its increased use probably reflects the rerouting of traffic from the interdicted Route 1032B. After disruptions early in February, the enemy apparently has again begun using the Se Bang Hieng river for the movement of supplies. On 18 February, FACs sighted drums floating down the river and others caught in retrieval areas near Route 913 north of Tchepone.

Tchepone/Muong Nong Areas

7. Communist intentions to continue a very high level of activity in the northern Panhandle were revealed [redacted]

[redacted] 25-30 miles northwest of Tchepone, which stated that 200-250 vehicles were to pass through its area every night for the remainder of the month. Traffic at this level would involve the greatest number of vehicles ever noted to be moving through a Binh Tram's area on a nightly basis.

8. The Communists have been moving large volumes of supplies through the Tchepone area by making use of the multiple route structure west and south of the town. Although the size of the flow cannot be measured with precision, [redacted] the traffic moving through the Binh Tram 33 area probably has been at record levels.

[redacted] Heavy rains and waterlogged roads in late February, however, hampered the effort. Nevertheless, the Binh Tram reported the achievement of 90% to 100% of its planned goals through much of February, on one occasion characterizing the performance of its subordinates as "outstanding."

9. The North Vietnamese plan to continue large-scale supply movements in the Tchepone area during March: [redacted]

"the last day of the first phase of the offensive," engineer units were working hard to finish a bypass road in time for the "second phase." This phase of the transportation offensive began on 4 March and is expected to run through the month. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the "crash," or first phase, launched on 7 February, was completed on schedule.

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10. Other sources also indicate surging traffic flows in the Tchepone area since 8 February. In the first two weeks of Lam Son 719, sensor detection on the heavily canopied Routes 917 and 914 west and south of Tchepone rose to a level roughly double that noted in the two weeks prior to the operation. Although detections dropped sharply after 24 February, coincident with torrential rains and the ending of the "crash phase" of the General Offensive, they continued to reflect a fairly high level of traffic on Route 914, the main road through the Tchepone area, from Binh Tram 33 to Binh Tram 34. Sensor detections of 1-2 March show traffic to be rebounding to the high levels of the February crash programs. Aerial observers also reported heavy use of roads in the area throughout February. Both Route 911 and parallel north/south routes to the west supported heavy truck use between the entry corridors and the staging areas near Tchepone and Muong Nong. FACs indicate that both Routes 917 and 914 showed increased use and that their numerous spurs carried very heavy traffic after 8 February.

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11. Pilots report that Route 23 west of Tchepone continued to show consistently moderate use but no dramatic change, indicating that the enemy has not been forced to redirect most of his traffic to a more secure system because of Lam Son 719. FACs report that traffic on Route 23 was moderate from north of Tchepone down to the Se Bang Hieng crossing until Operation Desert Rat began on 16 February. Since then, both Route 23 and Route 9 have reflected only light to very light traffic.

South of Tchepone

12. Recently, much of the Communist effort has been shifting to the region well south of Tchepone.

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] This new "crash" effort will

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be conducted simultaneously with the "second phase" of the offensive north of the Tchepone area. This suggests that the North Vietnamese intend to push supplies into the southern Panhandle throughout March and perhaps well into April.

13. This pattern of supply activity is in keeping with the enemy's normal dry season supply movement: "crash" efforts progress southward along with peak levels of cargo shipments. The beginning of an accelerated supply program south of Muong Nong is consistent with the evidence that large quantities of cargo have been moved through the Tchepone area during the past few weeks. FACs reported on 21 February that formerly abandoned Route 234/2341, which parallels much of Route 914, had been made serviceable and was supporting moderate traffic. Its use provides a western bypass around the crucial Route 914/92 junction and has helped the Communists to move supplies into the Muong Nong area.

14. From the start of Lam Son 719 until the end of the "crash phase," sensors reflected heavy traffic on Routes 99 and 92 -- the main roads south to Ban Bac. There was an apparent trebling of detections on Route 99 coupled with a decline in detections on Route 92. Aerial observers also indicate that Route 99 leading from Muong Nong south to Ban Bac was in "moderate to heavy" use throughout February, except for the last several days of the month when it was in "light to moderate" use. Since Route 99 also falls under the jurisdiction of Binh Trams 33, 34, and 35, the sensor and FAC reporting confirms that traffic is moving out of the Tchepone area to areas south of Lam Son 719 operations.

15. FACs have indicated that Ban Bac, the area served by Binh Tram 35, remains a hub of logistic activity and that the Route 92/96 corridor leading through the complex continued to show "moderate to heavy" use. In this area a storage facility [redacted]

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[redacted] was filled to capacity and was having difficulty accepting incoming cargo because of the high level of supply input. Through this period the facility apparently functioned effectively: [redacted]

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[redacted] To insure the transportation mission, antiaircraft

protection of Binh Tram 35 is being augmented by the addition of an AAA company. Further south, sensor detections on Route 96 just south of Chavane continued to reflect moderate traffic levels throughout February; although they did dip sharply on 24 February they recovered on 25 February to normal levels.

16. Exit routes leading off the Route 92/96 corridor also exhibited little change in traffic use according to pilots: Route 922 showed heavy traffic until 25 February and light-to-moderate traffic thereafter. Exit Route 165/966 extending east from Chavane reflected light to moderate vehicle activity to within several miles of the South Vietnamese border, and pilot reports of 2 March indicate the road to be in "good" condition. Farther south, exit Route 110 showed varying levels of vehicle activity on both its eastern and western ends according to FACs. On 19 February, pilots saw 16 trucks on the western end of the route near the Cambodian border -- the peak sighting this dry season on this route and an indication of the probable increasing throughput of supplies into Cambodia. We have received little reporting since that date on the status of Route 110, particularly where it enters into South Vietnam. The western end of Route 110 leading into Cambodia was reported as carrying "heavy" truck traffic on 26 February.

Enemy Supply Losses

17. Through 4 March, about 951 tons of enemy supplies had been captured or destroyed, as tabulated below:

	<u>Short Tons</u>
Class I (food)	381
Class II and IV (weapons and equipment) <u>a/</u>	61
Class III (POL)	373
Class V (ammunition)	136
<i>Total</i>	<i>951</i>

a. Including 19 tons of weapons and 42 tons of miscellaneous equipment and supplies. In addition, 226 vehicles have been seized or destroyed (153 trucks and 73 tanks).

18. The rate of supply captures in Laos was highest during the first week of operations when 441 tons of supplies were seized -- 46% of total losses to date. POL supplies comprised the bulk of losses reported in the first week of operations. Some 325 tons were seized -- 87% of such losses to date. Since the first week of the operation, food and ammunition losses have risen substantially, but the overall rate of supply losses has diminished. Losses averaged 63 tons daily during the first week, 50 tons daily in the second week, and only 16 tons daily during the last 10 days. The total tonnage of ammunition and weapons losses through 4 March equated to 1,800 individual weapons, 400 crew-served weapons, and some 200,000 rounds of ammunition.

Irregular Forces

19. Irregular forces targeted against the logistic system in the Laos Panhandle are attempting to further complicate the movement of supplies. Operation Desert Rat began on 16 February and is aimed at interdicting Route 23 south of Muong Phine. If successful and sustained, this operation would help to deny the Communists unimpeded use of the western route structures, cutting off the sole alternative to the traditional route structure through the Tchepone/Lam Son 719 area. If the Communists should apply significant force against these guerrilla units, they would, of course, have to withdraw. In response to the operation to date, the Communists have redeployed at least one battalion to the Muong Phine area. In addition, Binh Tram 31 elements near there have reportedly engaged the "enemy" forces. Overall, however, contact between irregular and Communist forces has been light and sporadic. Irregulars have reported cratering Route 23 south of Muong Phine. Pilot reports of only very light enemy use of Route 23 in this area indicate the road is probably blocked.

Cambodia

20. Communist logistic activities in northern Cambodia have increased significantly since December 1970. Since that time the enemy has constructed or upgraded nearly 100 miles of roads and motorable trails along the Route 97/Tonle Kong and Route 13 corridors between Laos and Stung Treng. Most of

this construction occurred between early January and early February. The Communists now have a direct and unimpeded access corridor between Laos and the key Cambodian supply points of Siem Pang and Stung Treng, significantly improving their overall capability to move supplies into the region. New bypasses, storage areas, and transshipment points further enhance the enemy's logistic capabilities in the area.

21. Enemy supply flows into Cambodia have probably increased as the more viable logistic system has evolved.

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Aerial photography has revealed increased enemy use of various roads in northern Cambodia and confirms a direct, actively used route between Laos and Stung Treng via Routes 97, 136(113), and 13 and various secondary roads. In addition, FACs reported "heavy" traffic on Route 97 in January and the development of new, active storage areas and transshipment points along the road. Pilots attacking Route 97 during the past month have reported increased instances of secondary explosions and fires, indicating probable growing ordnance stockpiles; one FAC reported that secondary explosions continued at 15-second intervals for about 30 minutes after an attack on Route 97 about 10 miles north of Siem Pang in late January. In sum, the evidence available from photography and FACs strongly suggests that over the past month or so the amount of supplies being moved from Laos into Cambodia has been substantially greater than that indicated by sensors and roadwatch teams along western Route 110 in the southern Panhandle or riverwatch teams along the Se Kong.

Conclusions

22. All intelligence sources indicate that the Communists have been able to move large amounts of supplies into and throughout the Laos Panhandle despite Operation Lam Son 719, [redacted]

[redacted] they plan to maintain the effort in the weeks ahead. [redacted]

[redacted] They included Binh Tram 27 located at the western DMZ entry route, Binh Trams 34 and 35 located south of Tchepone, and Binh Tram 53 located in northern Cambodia.

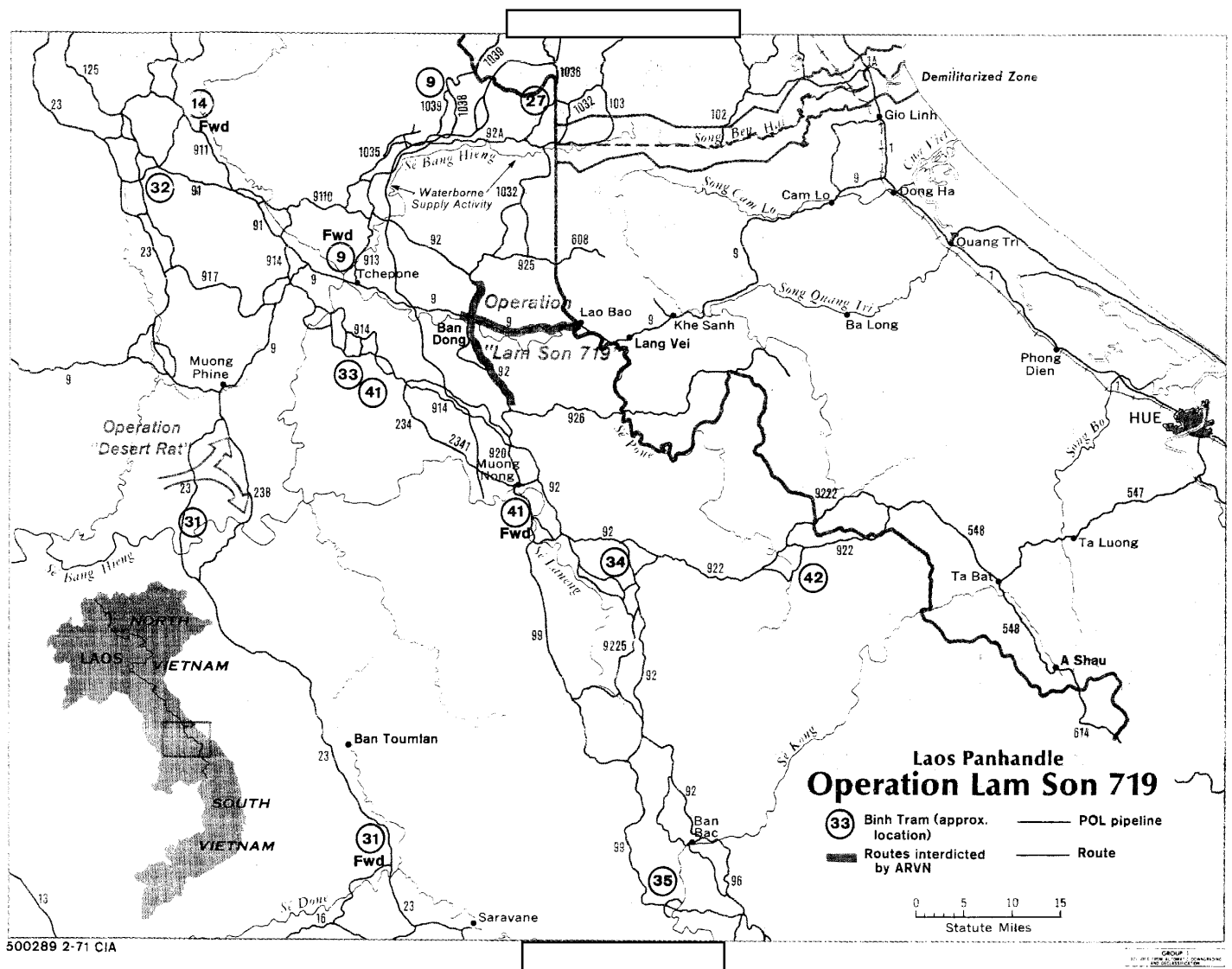
23. [redacted] sensors, and aerial reconnaissance provide an impressive catalogue of an accelerated and high rate of supply movement from North Vietnam through the three entry corridors to Binh Trams 32, 33, and 41 and thence to Binh Trams 34 and 35 southeast of Tchepone and south of the operational area of Lam Son 719. The continuous pattern of heavy truck traffic extends to the Ban Bac area, 90 miles south of Tchepone. Further south, there is considerable evidence that increasing -- but still unquantifiable -- amounts of supplies have been moving out of Laos into Cambodia over the past month or so.

24. Although generally successful, the Communist supply effort has not been without problems. Route 92 north and south of Route 9 was interdicted early in the operation; over 950 tons of supplies have been lost to ARVN forces; and bombing of vital lines of communication continues to cause problems. Torrential rains beginning on 24 February and ending two days later left roads waterlogged and many water crossings temporarily blocked, which impeded traffic flows. The sharp drop in sensor detections after 24 February probably reflected both problems associated with the poor weather and the fluctuation in activity as one transportation phase ends prior to the beginning of the next. By 2 March, detections had again surged upward.

25. The Communists currently face a dual task: at the same time that they are expediting supply flows through Laos for their forces in Cambodia

and South Vietnam they must resupply augmented security forces countering ARVN forces in the Tchepone area. They appear to be meeting this challenge. Maintenance of high supply flows reflects the fact that Lam Son 719 has not pushed far enough into Laos to cut the most important arteries that carry supplies from North Vietnam to South Vietnam and Cambodia. Even if the forces reach Tchepone, the main arteries will remain intact because the Communists' logistical movements currently are following a northwest-southeast axis (Routes 917 to 914, 234/2341 to 99 and 96) that at its nearest point is about five miles south of Tchepone and Route 9. By following these routes, Communist logistical commands have been able to transport supplies through the area occupied or threatened by Lam Son 719 without serious disruption.

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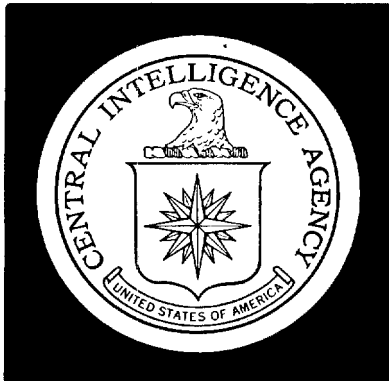
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DIRECTORATE OF
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MORI/CDF this IM; pages 27-41

Intelligence Memorandum

The Ho Chi Minh Trail

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ER IM 71-44
March 1971

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Approved For Release 2006/03/06 : CIA-RDP78T02095R000400030001-2

Approved For Release 2006/03/06 : CIA-RDP78T02095R000400030001-2

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
March 1971

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Ho Chi Minh Trail

Introduction

The Ho Chi Minh Trail, the popular name for the Communists' logistic system in the Laotian Panhandle, is very much a misnomer. It is really a labyrinth of roads, trails, waterways, small dispersed storage buildings, truck parks, and repair facilities. The 1,900 miles of roads within the Panhandle are not the Lincoln highways of the 1920s, nor are they in the same class as a Burma Road or Alcan Highway. They are more similar to the logging roads of the west or Canada, but even these roads are designed to carry much heavier vehicles than those used in the Panhandle of Laos.

The road system of the Ho Chi Minh Trail extends in a north-south direction for over 300 miles across a rugged mountain chain 2,500 to 3,500 feet in elevation, from Mu Gia Pass in the north to the tri-border area (where Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam join) in the south. In terms of terrain and distances closer to home, moving supplies through the Ho Chi Minh Trail would be roughly analogous to traveling from Allentown to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Weather is a major factor in understanding the operation of the enemy's logistical system in Laos. In the Panhandle the dry season arrives in mid- to late October and lasts until about mid-May. During this period the Communists must move the bulk of their supplies to Cambodia and South

Note: This memorandum was prepared by the Office of Economic Research.

Vietnam because once the rains start it becomes extremely difficult to move large volumes of supplies over water soaked roads and to ford swollen streams. Finally, in moving supplies through the Ho Chi Minh Trail the Communists not only must overcome the problems of terrain, distance, and weather but must also cope with an unprecedented scale of US bombing.

The Communists rely heavily upon Soviet built trucks to move supplies. They also rely on a wide variety of other transport means as well. These include pipelines in the northern reaches of the Panhandle, and, when needed, oxcarts, bicycles, pirogues, and porters. Innovations such as free floating POL and food down the rivers are used with skill and effectiveness.

Description of the System *

Entry Corridors

1. Supplies enter the Laotian Panhandle through three major corridors: (1) the well-known Mu Gia Pass which is the northernmost entry route, (2) the Ban Karai Pass which was first opened in April 1966, and (3) Ban Raving Pass, more commonly known as the Western DMZ entry corridor, which was opened to traffic in December 1969. A look at a map makes it clear why the North Vietnamese have added the new entry corridors. From Mu Gia Pass to Tchepone is 90 miles. From the western DMZ to Tchepone is only 30 miles. Thus, by using the southern entry routes traffic moving into the Tchepone area avoids much of the harassment of the bombing. The availability of three major entry corridors also makes it easier for the North Vietnamese to counter the bombing.

2. In the northern reaches of the Panhandle, from the three passes south to the Tchepone area, there are a vast number of alternate roads that the North Vietnamese have built to counteract the effects of the bombing. Thus when one road is

* See the system map following page 10. A detailed map of the Tchepone area follows page 8.

interdicted there may be as many as four alternative routes over which the North Vietnamese can shunt traffic. In the Ban Karai Pass area there are as many as 5 roads that can be used to move supplies across the border into the system. The number of roads, alternatives, and bypasses in the area north of Tchepone has grown to such an extent that the road system there can be characterized as a web of interconnecting veins rather than a few mainline arteries.

3. South of Tchepone the road system is less dense because once supplies reach the Tchepone area they have passed the main brunt of the bombing. Nevertheless, the road system south of Tchepone is still highly redundant. There has been no letup in roadbuilding in the Panhandle: in 1965 there were 340 miles of road in the Panhandle, in 1968 there were 1,200 miles, today there are over 1,900 miles.

4. As one moves south through the road system there are key lateral roads running from west to east. These are the roads used to move supplies into South Vietnam. The first such lateral road is Route 9 which was an important enemy supply artery during the siege of Khe Sanh but was never used much by the Communists after that. Farther south Routes 926 and 922 lead to the A Shau Valley. Another 90 miles to the south a fan-shaped net of roads leads eastward from Chavane toward the central areas of Military Region 1 of South Vietnam. At the foot of the north/south system through the Laotian Panhandle is Route 110 which is used to move supplies either eastward into South Vietnam toward the vicinity of Dak To or Kontum or westward to the Cambodian supply route running south toward Siem Pang and Stung Treng.

Logistical Forces

5. The 40,000 to 50,000 personnel charged with moving supplies through the Panhandle of Laos are organized into about 16 logistical commands spread throughout the Panhandle. These commands -- called Binh Trams, meaning "military stations" in Vietnamese -- are of regimental size and will have between 1,500 and 3,000 men subordinate to each. Each Binh Tram has a number of engineer, transport, and AAA battalions.



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On maps produced by the intelligence community the designated locations of Binh Trams tend to give the false impression that they operate at very specific locations. In fact, Binh Trams have large areas of responsibility that include many roads, numerous storage facilities, and other support facilities. Because of the threat of air strikes, storage sites and truck parks are carefully camouflaged, well dispersed, and only a part of them are in use at any one time. Each Binh Tram has subordinate units that man the defense and logistical facilities along the routes in its areas of responsibility. Rear Services Units command complexes of small dispersed storage buildings which may contain as many as 900 tons of supplies. Individual platoons may be in charge of a personnel way station (called a T-station). Even smaller groups will be dispersed along the roads to control traffic and relay forewarning of US air attacks that may be occurring further down the road.

7. We have learned from captured documents much about what can be called the "crude sophistication" of the enemy's logistical system. Truck repair, to cite one example, is performed at three separate echelons. A carburetor adjustment or other minor repair is supposed to be done by a repair crew of a few mechanics attached to a transportation platoon. More complicated repairs are done by larger repair shops attached to the transportation companies or at the battalion level.

Captured documents spell out in great detail work-order numbers, manpower norms, and all the other accounting measures that are the penchant of the Communist countries.

8. The Communists have assigned about 2,500 trucks to the Panhandle. The number of trucks attached to a single transportation battalion generally varies from 60 to 70. Defense and engineer battalions also maintain vehicles for their own use so that there will be between 60 and 300 trucks assigned to any one Binh Tram, the number generally declining further south along the main route structure. On any one night, however, usually not more than 50% of the trucks available in the Panhandle are on the road.

How the System Operates

9. The enemy's logistical system operates by moving supplies southward from one Binh Tram to another until the supplies are shunted eastward along one of the lateral routes leading to South Vietnam or until they reach the bottom of the funnel in the southern Panhandle and are moved into Cambodia (or South Vietnam).

10. This mode of operation calls for a great deal of shuttling by the trucks. A typical operation would be as follows: Trucks move out of a truck park [redacted] northwest of Tchepone, load supplies from a dispersed warehouse, and set out for a warehouse in [redacted] just south of Tchepone. Depending upon the threat of air attack (and more recently ground attack) a convoy of from 5 to 15 trucks, dispersed at 30-50 yard intervals, will move down the road. Speeds are slow, usually averaging about 10-15 miles per hour. Canopied parking areas are located at frequent spots along the road to avoid as much as possible having the trucks caught in an exposed position during an air attack. The trucks usually start their journey at nightfall so as to get to their assigned destination and be unloaded before daybreak. The empty trucks usually make the return trip the next night although, under "crash" programs such as we are observing now, they may make their deliveries and return the same night. Although it is unusual, trucks move in broad daylight on some

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occasions, especially when there are emergency conditions or crash programs under way or inclement weather seriously inhibits US air operations.

11. Over the years, we have come to recognize a distinct three-phase cycle to movement of supplies through the Panhandle. The first phase begins in late September or October and is designed to get the roads, bridges, fords, and warehouses back in operating status. Bulldozers come out of caves where they have been in storage sites during the rainy season, and together with the engineering troops armed with axe and shovel, the road system is put back in operating condition in about a month.

12. In the second phase we begin to see the input of supplies into the system. These first inputs are used to replenish the stockpiles drawn down during the rainy season and to meet the projected needs of those who are operating the system as well as the thousands of infiltrators that pass through the system each year. The Communists methodically seem to concentrate on the restocking of the system before facing up to the problem of maintaining a throughput of supplies to replenish their stockpiles of combat material in South Vietnam or Cambodia. This dry season and last the Communists devoted most of the month of December to this restocking phase.

13. In the third phase the system goes into high gear, or what the Communists call their "general offensive," when they push supplies through to South Vietnam and Cambodia. This year the general offensive began on the night of 4 January, about the same date as last year.

The Surge Effect

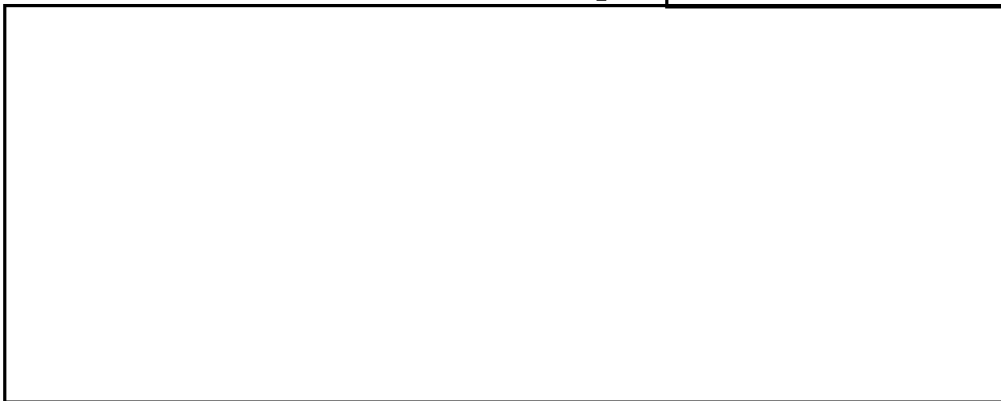
14. Both last year and this year, activity in the Panhandle clearly reflects what we have come to call "the surge effect" as supplies flow southward through the system.

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15. As a specific Binh Tram reports on the accomplishments of its own crash program, Binh Trams further to the south then become more active. As the southward flow of supplies into the area under its control increases, the receiving Binh Tram then launches its own crash program to move the goods even further south. This pattern was very clear last month when the Communists launched a "crash" program on 7 February.

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16. This surge of supplies from north to south through the Panhandle is similar to what we observed last year. The southward surge was reflected in

[redacted]
[redacted] all of which began to report greater throughput tonnages exiting to South Vietnam as the transport offensive went on.

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17. The surge of supplies that we observe is not a one-time, massive slug of supplies finding its way for 300 miles south through the system. Last year, for example, the surge reached [redacted] the area around Ban Bac in the southern Panhandle, about mid-March. At about the same time the input of supplies through Mu Gia Pass, the most northern entry corridor, began to taper off, but the inputs through Ban Karai and the western DMZ routes were continuing at high levels. By late March the input through Ban Karai had pretty much phased out. But it was not until well

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into April that the inputs through the western DMZ route began to phase down. Thus for several months -- March and April in particular -- there were large flows of supplies moving throughout the entire system.

18. Last year's pattern is being repeated this dry season, and we clearly see an increasing level of traffic moving farther and farther south in the Panhandle. The new wrinkle this year is that the Communists, clearly anticipating the Allied incursions toward Tchepone, have accelerated their supply movements in a series of crash programs.

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19. This system of a series of crash programs to accelerate an increased level of supply movements has a two-fold objective. First, to supply the Communist combat forces opposing Lam Son 719, and, second, to move at record rates the normal throughput of supplies out of the potentially dangerous Tchepone area to the Binh Trams to the south.

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Measuring the Flow

21. The most difficult problem in understanding the operation of the Ho Chi Minh Trail is to gain an appreciation of the volume of supplies that move through the system. Ideally, one would want to know the volume that entered the system, the volume consumed within Laos, and the tonnages that moved into Cambodia and South Vietnam. Obviously, the composition of these supplies whether rice, ammunition, weapons, or salt is even more important.

22. Years ago when Mu Gia Pass was the major entry point the task was easier. Then the daily reports of a roadwatch team could be used to arrive at a reasonably accurate estimate of the total input of supplies into the Panhandle. Other teams stationed throughout the Panhandle were able to report on the volume of the traffic as it moved southward, if not its composition. As more entry points were established and more bypasses were constructed, it became impossible to measure the supply flows by aggregating the roadwatch reports. It became clear from looking at other sources -- aerial photography, [redacted] and aerial observer reports -- that the roadwatch teams could tell only part of the story.

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23. New techniques for measuring the supply flow have been tried. One of the most recent is a complicated "model" primarily dependent upon electronic sensor reporting. Regrettably this system has a number of internal inconsistencies which affect its results. It also behaves erratically when compared with other intelligence, sometimes confirming, sometimes contradicting. Thus, at this point in time there is no method, based on either human or technological resources, which we regard as reliable enough to produce a set of hard numbers on the flow of supplies into, through, or out of the Panhandle. Of all of these flows the estimating of throughput tonnages into South Vietnam and Cambodia is the most difficult.

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26. In view of the vast amount of labor that has gone into the building of the Ho Chi Minh Trail the total tonnages of supplies moved from one Binh Tram to another frequently sound small to those unfamiliar with the logistic statistics on the war in Indochina. Indeed, they seem small compared to the 40,000 to 50,000 men employed in moving them. They are microscopic when compared to other benchmarks -- US requirements in South Vietnam, or even Communist military requirements in the Korean War.

27. However, they can be put in perspective in terms of the war in South Vietnam by realizing that the very large tonnages of ordnance that arrived in Sihanoukville -- a route not subject to interdiction or natural obstacles -- for the VC/NVA forces -- 21,600 tons -- averaged out to about 20 tons a day between the time these deliveries started and the time they ended. Thus the ammunition and weapons that nightly move down the Ho Chi Minh Trail seem adequate for maintaining a hot war in Indochina.

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Intelligence Memorandum

*The Growth And Current Deployment Of The Laotian-Based
559th Transportation Group*

Secret

ER IM 71-25
February 1971

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
February 1971

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Growth And Current Deployment
Of The Laotian-Based
559th Transportation Group

Introduction

The North Vietnamese over many years have developed a complex logistical system in south Laos -- the so-called Ho Chi Minh Trail -- to support their forces in South Vietnam. Always important to the enemy's war effort in northern South Vietnam, the system has become since the closing of the port of Kompong Som (formerly Sihanoukville) the vital life line for the Communist forces in all of South Vietnam and Cambodia.

In 1959 the Communist logistic forces in south Laos consisted of a single battalion with a strength of about 500 men. Today this strength has grown to between 40,000 and 50,000 personnel organized into two major transportation groups -- the 559th which dates back to May (the fifth month) of 1959 and the 470th which was established as recently as April (the fourth month) of 1970.

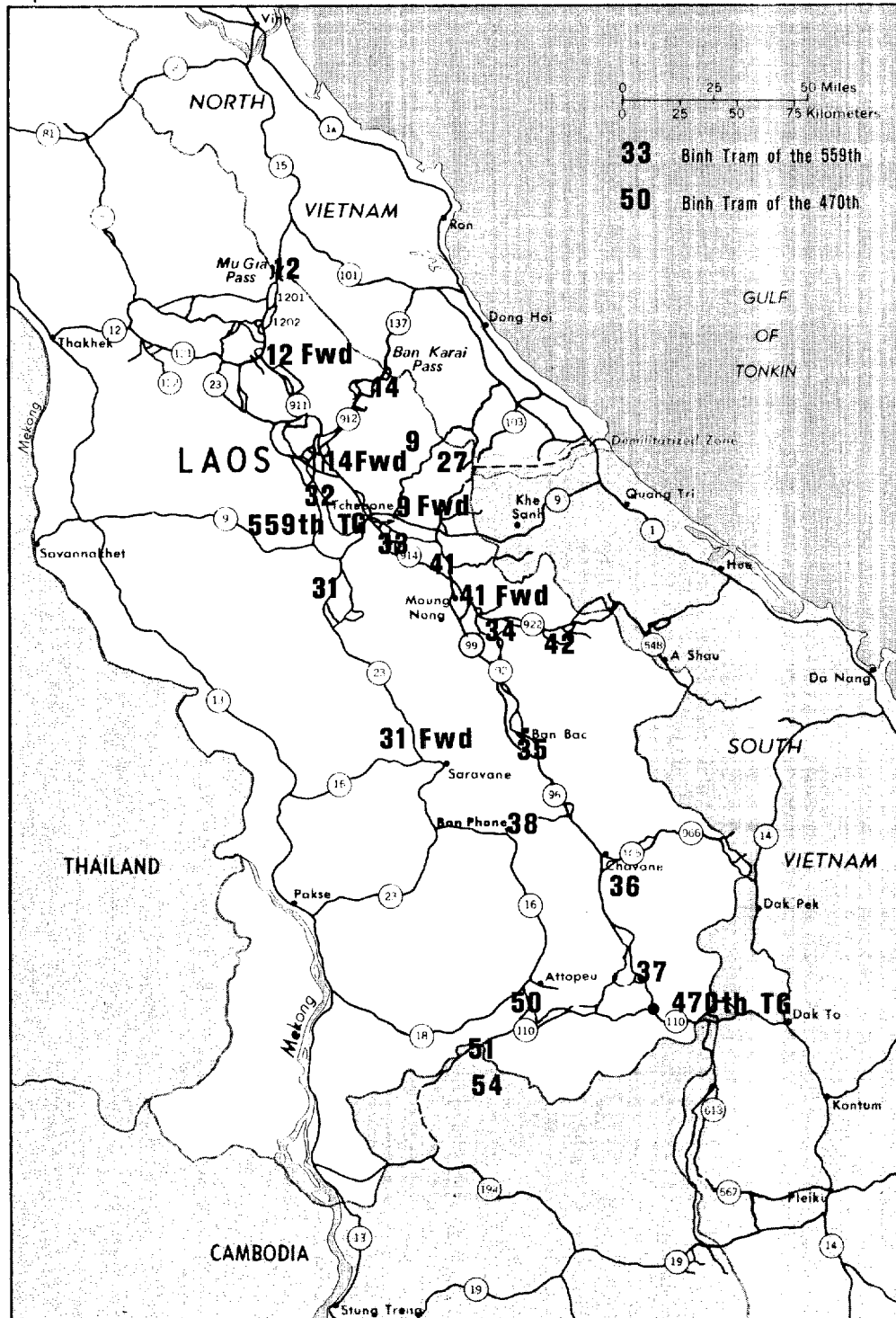
The logistic forces in south Laos operate within a corridor 300 miles in length and from 50 to 75 miles wide containing about 1,500 miles of main and bypass roads plus thousands of trails and two waterways. In its northern reaches there are two POL pipelines that have been constructed since 1968. Sixteen Binh Trams now extend throughout South Laos (see Figure 1) each functioning as a regimental-size authority controlling personnel and supply movements

Note: This memorandum was prepared by the Office of Economic Research and coordinated within CIA.

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Figure 1

Disposition of the 559th and 470th Transportation Groups in the Laotian Panhandle



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through a specific geographic area. Each Binh Tram has subordinate to it the necessary transportation, engineer, infantry, medical, and air defense elements needed to carry out its responsibilities.

This memorandum provides a current assessment of the Communist logistic forces in south Laos and provides an historical review of their development from 1959 to 1970 (see Appendix A). A chronology of significant events in the development of the 559th is contained in Appendix B.

Strengths

1. Communist logistics strength in the Laotian Panhandle is now centered on two organizational entities: the long-established 559th Transportation Group, and the recently established 470th Transportation Group. The estimated combined strength of both groups is about 40,000 to 50,000 men with about three-fourths of the total forces assigned to the 559th. Administratively, the groups are divided into Binh Trams. The subordination of identified battalions is given in Tables 1 and 2.

2. The tabulation below shows the growth of logistics personnel operating in the Laotian Panhandle for selected years since 1959.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Personnel Strength</u>
1959	400 - 500
1961	2,000 - 2,500
1963	3,500 - 4,500
1967	10,000 - 13,000
1968	20,000 - 30,000
1969	30,000 - 40,000
1970	40,000 - 50,000

Growth during the last 11 years has been rapid, but most striking during the 1967-68 period, at which time the North Vietnamese undertook a rapid buildup of men and supplies to meet the quickening

Table 1

Currently Identified Battalions Subordinate to Binh Trams of the 559th Transportation Group a/

Binh Tram	Area of Operations	Antiaircraft Artillery	Engineer	Transport	Communications Liaison
9	Western DMZ input corridor from North Vietnam	4th 7th 16th 17th 24th	94th 337th 668th	878th	-
12	Mu Gia Pass input corridor from North Vietnam	2nd	2nd	660th 770th	-
14	Ban Karai Pass input corridor from North Vietnam	13th 17th 21st 29th/42nd	13th 24th 335th	52nd 781st	7th
27	Western DMZ input corridor (Se Bang Hieng River) from North Vietnam	35th 18th 34th	25th	161st 162nd 163rd	-
31	Route 23/238 area south of Muong Phine	14th	27th 93rd	53rd	-
32	Route 91/914/917 Complex north of Tchepone	1st 12th 16th 22nd	31st 35th 69th	60th 102nd 990th	9th
33	Route 9/914 southeast of Tchepone	20th 26th	71st	61st 965th	10th
34 b/	South of Muong Nong along Route 92 and 922	10th 44th	29th	51st 101st	11th
35	Ban Bac area Route 92/96	6th 32nd	5th 41st 43rd	59th 162nd	12th
41	Route 9/925/926 exit corridor to South Vietnam	4th 8th 28th	1st 2nd 39th 73rd 75th	54th	14th

Table 1

Currently Identified Battalions Subordinate to Binh Trams of the 559th Transportation Group a/
(Continued)

Binh Tram	Area of Operations	Antiaircraft Artillery	Engineer	Transport	Communications Liaison
42	Route 922 exit corridor to South Vietnam	2nd 36th	4th 37th 45th 47th	55th	15th
44	Route 165/966 exit corridor to South Vietnam	28th	1st 2nd	56th	17th

a. A dash indicates that battalions of this type have not been identified. There are additional units that may be under the control of the 559th, but not subordinate to its Binh Trams. These include the 24B (4th Battalion only) and 48th Infantry Regiments; elements of the 4th, 10th, and 98th Engineer Regiments; and elements of the 282nd and 591st Antiaircraft Artillery Regiments. The status of other units such as the 141st Infantry and 675B Artillery Regiments is not clear, but they may also be associated with the 559th.

Overall strength estimates given in paragraph 2 were derived by aggregating the reported strengths of units associated with the 559th. Where reported strengths were lacking, force levels were estimated by averaging the reported strengths for each type of unit and applying that average to the number of units of that type associated with the 559th. A net addition of 10,000 men were added to the 1970 estimate, reflecting personnel infiltration data carried in the 5,000 series, which identify groups destined for southern Laos probably for the 559th and 470th.

b. Also subordinate to Binh Tram 34 are the 26th and 133rd Signal Battalions that have the responsibility for stringing and maintaining land lines. There are probably signal battalions attached to other Binh Trams that have not been identified.

Table 2

Identified Battalions Subordinate to Binh Trams of the 470th Transportation Group a/

<u>Binh Tram</u>	<u>Area of Operations</u>	<u>Antiaircraft Artillery</u>	<u>Engineer</u>	<u>Transport</u>	<u>Communications Liaison</u>
36	Chavane area, Route 96 and 165	40th	341st	972nd	-
37	Junction of Route 96 and 110 east of Attopeu	30th 38th	2nd	58th	16th
38	Ban Phone area Route 16	-	-	-	-
50	Possibly along the Se Kong River south of Attopeu	-	-	-	-
51	Unlocated; probably in Cambodia	-	-	-	-
54	Unlocated; probably in Cambodia	-	-	-	-

a. A dash indicates that battalions of this type have not been identified.

pace of the war in the South. The net increase that occurred in 1970 was the result of the emergence of the 470th and the augmentation of the 559th.

3. In addition to the 559th and the 470th, two other major military commands operate in southern Laos - the 565th Group and the 968th Front. The 565th serves both as the senior NVA administrative authority in south Laos and as the adviser to Pathet Lao forces. The 968th Front is responsible for ground security in the Panhandle and controls most of the infantry units there.

Response to Cambodia

4. The current deployment of enemy logistics forces, as shown on Figure 1, reflects adjustments that the North Vietnamese instituted shortly after the overthrow of Prince Sihanouk and the Allied incursions into Cambodia last spring. At that time the 559th Group, after apparently completing its mission for the 1969-70 dry season, was preparing to withdraw many of its units to North Vietnam as had been done in the 1967 and 1969 wet seasons. This intention changed abruptly with the Allied cross-border operations into Cambodia. The operation had a telling impact on the enemy in at least two respects. First, he was forced to abandon sizable stockpiles of supplies as his forces withdrew deeper into Cambodia. Second, and perhaps more important over the longer term, the cross-border operations established a new precedent which the enemy feared might lead to similar Allied operations in southern Laos.

5. On the basis of these considerations, Hanoi decided to keep most of the 559th Transportation Group in the Laotian Panhandle during the 1970 wet season. The group would remain not only to carry additional supplies south if needed but also to protect the lines of communication (LOCs) through south Laos in the event of Allied attack. The security of the route through the Laotian Panhandle, now the only avenue for large-scale movement of arms and ammunition to their forces, was critical if the Communists were to maintain a credible military posture.

6. Hanoi's decision to keep the 559th in the Laotian Panhandle during the entire wet season was not based on the expectation of moving supplies through the system in amounts sufficient to replace those lost to the Allied cross-border operations. The 559th's actions during the wet season indicate that Hanoi had three things in mind: (a) to provide security for the system as protection against Allied incursions, (b) to be in a position to get the dry season logistics program off to an early start in the fall, and (c) to make use of the entry route through the western DMZ -- the shortest route structure subject to air interdiction -- for the movement of supplies that would be needed within the system during the wet season.

7. An initial adjustment by the enemy was to deploy seven or eight engineer, transportation, and antiaircraft artillery battalions from the northern Panhandle to the central Panhandle adjacent to the entry corridor around the DMZ. Units of the 559th remaining in the Mu Gia Pass area not tasked with security were allowed to withdraw to North Vietnam, and the Binh Tram in the area was temporarily deactivated. At about the same time, large-scale supply movement into south Laos through the Ban Karai Pass was ended. As the wet season in the Panhandle continued, the level of supply shipments declined. Worsening weather and continued air strikes reduced the trafficability of the roadnet causing continued POL shortages, especially in the southern portion of the Panhandle. While available evidence indicates that the quantity of supplies moved was somewhat below that planned for the wet season, the 559th did move sufficient quantities both to support an increase in the combat structure of forces in the Panhandle and to increase its own personnel strength. This expansion of forces enabled increased security of the LOCs and facilitated efforts of the 559th to take on the additional burden of supporting Communist forces in the COSVN area who previously were supplied from Cambodia.

8. As the dry season of 1970-71 approached, the 559th began to redeploy many of its units in anticipation of the heavy workload ahead. Elements of Binh Tram (BT) 31 formerly located on the roadnet just south of Mu Gia Pass were relocated south of Muong Phine where Route 23 intersects with the

Se Bang Hieng River. BT 38 formerly located at the intersection of Route 110, the Se Kong River, and the Cambodian border was relocated north to Ban Phone apparently to receive supplies from BT 31 via the Route 16/23 complex. The new deployment of BT 38 also meant that it now could receive supplies shipped from BT 35 in Ban Bac via the northern Se Kong River and transship them again on the river to the Attopeu area.

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three new Binh Trams numbered 50, 51, and 54. At least one of these Binh Trams (BT 50) is believed to be located in the area south of Attopeu along the Se Kong River and Route 110. If the enemy has adhered to past practices of sequential numbering of Binh Trams, it is likely that the higher numbered Binh Trams in the 50 series are deployed further south, possibly along Route 97 in Cambodia. While information concerning the function and geographic control of the 470th is limited, it is believed to control all known Communist logistic operations south of the Ban Bac area, including BTs 36, 37, and 38 and those in the 50 series. Moreover, the location of the Binh Trams in the 50 series suggests that the primary mission of the group is to support enemy operations in Cambodia.

11. Although the present command relationship between the 559th and 470th is not clear, we believe that both have equal status in that they each report directly to the General Directorate of Rear Services (GDRS) in Hanoi and have ultimate responsibility for their own area of operations.

12. Even while reorganizing, the 559th continued to prepare the Panhandle logistics system for the dry season. By mid-November its roadnet was operational, and extensive construction was under way on new support and storage facilities. New bypass routes were constructed in the Chavane and Ban Bac areas and a connector road between Route 1032B and 925 was built. By mid-January 1971 the general transportation offensive of the 1970-71 dry season was under way, and very large quantities of supplies were moving south through its area of responsibility.

Prospects

13. During the next few months the 559th can be expected to continue to attempt to improve the logistics system in the northern and central Panhandle. New bypass routes probably will be constructed and antiaircraft artillery defenses improved. The 559th may also upgrade infantry units assigned to protect its Binh Trams from companies to battalions in the wake of continued harassment of their LOCs by friendly irregular forces.

14. With respect to the 470th, it may attempt to open Route 16 around the Bolovens Plateau from Ban Phone to Attoupeu, providing that the 968th front gives it adequate security against friendly guerrilla operations staged from the eastern rim of the Plateau. In addition, it probably will also reopen Route 97 which runs from the terminus of Route 110 in Laos along the Tonle Kong River into Cambodia and on to Siem Pang. This route coupled with the existing route structure in Cambodia will probably provide a direct truckable route from southern Laos to Communist forces operating in the Kratie region of Cambodia. Once this route is operating, the 470th can be expected to begin substantial supply shipments to COSVN, the major control authority for Communist forces operating in southern Indochina. If the responsibility of the 470th is to extend into Cambodia, however, its structure and personnel strength will probably require significant upgrading. In this connection, since early September, some 5,700 personnel have been observed in the infiltration pipeline destined for the 470th.

APPENDIX A

Historical Review of the 559th Transportation Group

This appendix essentially reviews and highlights factors underlying the development of the 559th Transportation Group from early in 1959 to May 1970.

The 1959-61 Period

1. In May 1959 the 559th Transportation Group was established, consisting of a small headquarters staff located in Hanoi and one operational subordinate, Battalion 70, located at Ho Village in the southwestern portion of Quang Binh Province, North Vietnam. The headquarters staff was primarily responsible for coordinating the activities of the 70th Battalion with General Directorate of Rear Services elements responsible for supply movements within North Vietnam. The 70th Battalion, with a strength of about 500 men, was responsible for the actual infiltration of men and material from North Vietnam into South Vietnam.

2. Coincident with the formation of the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam (NLFSV) in January 1961, the rate of infiltration into South Vietnam increased sharply. In February, Battalion 70 was redesignated Group 70 and its strength was increased to about 2,000 men, making it a regimental-size unit. Subsequently, it has often been referred to as the 70th Transportation Regiment of the 559th Group.

3. By the end of 1961, Group 70 contained two communications-liaison battalions, two infantry companies, a political staff, and a rear services staff. The first communications-liaison battalion was responsible for ten communications-liaison or T stations* numbered 1 to 10 which were located along the infiltration route from just north of the DMZ southwest to the Ban Dong area of Laos. The

* A communications-liaison or T station is a small way station for the support of personnel moving by foot through the infiltration system.

second communications-liaison battalion was also responsible for a series of ten T stations; these were numbered 11 to 20 and ran along the infiltration route from Ban Dong into Thua Thien Province in South Vietnam. Both the first and second communications-liaison battalions had an estimated strength of about 800 men, with the size of subordinate T stations ranging from 60 to 80 men.

4. The 70th Group had two independent infantry companies directly subordinate to its headquarters that provided route security. The first infantry company protected the infiltration route from attack by ARVN forces operating out of the area currently known as Military Region 1. The second infantry company, located in the Tchepone area of Laos, protected the route from attack by the Laotian troops of General Phoumi-Nosavan.

5. During this period the personnel infiltration route of the 70th Group originated at Ho Village and ran south along the Long Dai River toward Mountain 1001. From Mountain 1001 the trail moved through the western end of the DMZ into Laos. After entering Laos the route turned southward paralleling the Lao-South Vietnamese border and continued into the Ban Dong area where it crossed Route 9. Below Route 9 the trail extended along the present alignment of Routes 92 and 922 into Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.

6. By the end of 1961 the Communists in Southern Laos and South Vietnam were being supplied from North Vietnam through Laos by primitive transport* on trails and inland waterways. The supply transport route followed the Se Bang Hieng River valley around the end of the DMZ to the Tchepone area of Laos. Supplies were moved further south from the Tchepone area on foot trails or in native water craft on the Se Kong River.

The 1962-65 Period

7. In 1962 the Communists in South Vietnam began receiving increasing support from North Vietnam via Laos. For its part the 559th expanded the capacity of the Laotian infiltration system by

* *Primitive transport includes the movement of supplies by porters, bicycles, and pack animals.*

constructing new roads and improving the existing infiltration trails. This added capability supported a major change in Communist strategy from an internally supported insurgency to an externally supported war involving major combat units.

8. To provide increasing external support for South Vietnam, the North Vietnamese began improving Route 15/12 through Mu Gia Pass and began construction of Route 23 in Laos.* This new road ran from the terminus of Route 12 as far south as the Muong Phine area where it intersected with Route 9. Since Route 9, constructed by the French years earlier, ran from the Muong Phine area east through Tchepone to Ban Dong, the supply road through Mu Gia Pass was now linked with the personnel infiltration trail which ran from the western DMZ through Ban Dong. Thus, by the end of 1962 the Communists had a truckable route from Mu Gia Pass to as far south as Ban Dong.

9. Early in 1963 the Communists also began to make improvements in their personnel infiltration system in the North Vietnamese Panhandle. They constructed a new road, Route 103, as far south as the DMZ area to shorten the distance infiltrators would have to walk inside North Vietnam. After 1963, infiltrators entered the 559th portion of the infiltration route at Station T-1** just north of Mountain 1001 above the DMZ.

10. In order to expedite the movement of men and supplies to South Vietnam, the 70th Group, formerly located at Ho Village, North Vietnam, moved to the Ban Dong area of Laos where the supply and personnel infiltration routes joined. In addition, the 70th Group ceased to operate the infiltration system beyond the junction of Routes 92 and 922. The route beyond this area was taken over by a new 559th subordinate, the 71st Group.

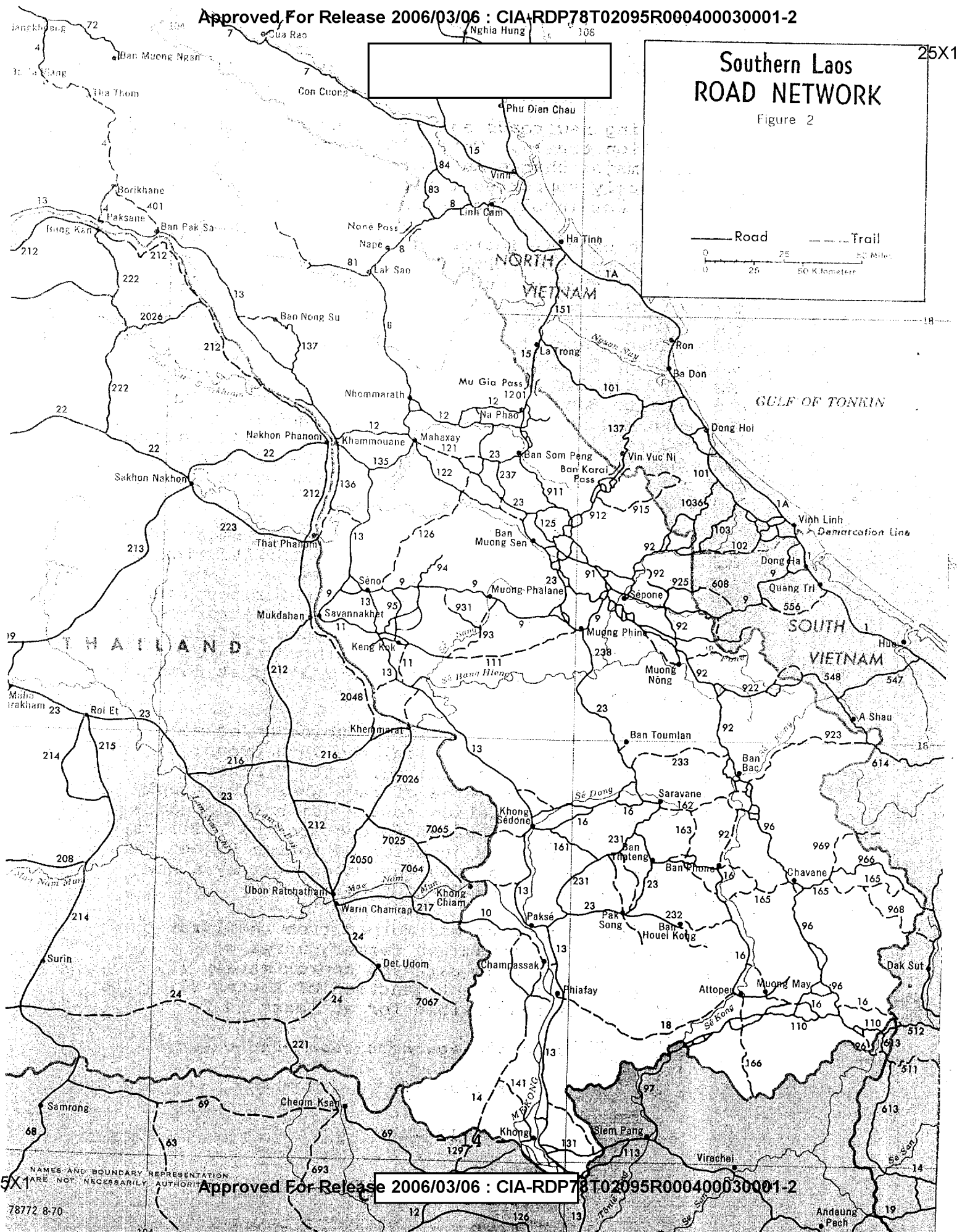
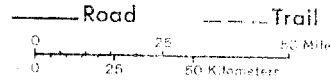
11. The 71st Group was formed from infiltrators from North Vietnam and former cadres of Group 70. It was headquartered approximately 10 miles east of the present junction of Routes 92 and 922 and was responsible for at least 14 T

* For details on the southern Laos road network, see Figure 2.

** Also known as Station 70.

Southern Laos ROAD NETWORK

Figure 2



stations which ran in a southeasterly direction along the Lao-South Vietnamese border into Quang Nam Province. The 71st Group is believed to have been organized into four battalions with a personnel strength of 1,500 to 2,500 men.

12. The route structure in the area of the 71st Group's operations was substantially improved and expanded during the 1962-65 period. In February 1963, for example, the former cart path from Ban Dong to Muong Nong was made truck passable and turned into a main supply artery, identified as strategic Route 92. Later that same year construction on extensions of Route 92 south of Muong Nong began. Now called 922, this new route ran from Muong Nong in a southeastern direction to the Se La Mang River and continued on to the South Vietnamese border north of the A Shau Valley. In November 1964, at the end of the rainy season in Laos, the North Vietnamese began extending Route 92 south from the Muong Nong area. Construction on this route was continued through the 1965 wet season, and by the end of 1965 the Communists had a road extending more than 30 miles further to the Ban Bac area.

13. In order to gain maximum benefit from the improving Viet Cong situation in the South, Hanoi began the infiltration of at least three regular North Vietnamese Army regiments to South Vietnam in the 1964-65 dry season. These units, which proceeded along the infiltration route maintained by the 559th, entered South Vietnam then moved south to the Central Highlands. At the same time, Hanoi began to upgrade the firepower of Communist main force units in South Vietnam by progressively arming them with a standard family of small arms using one caliber of ammunition and by providing them with more modern supporting arms. This conversion shifted the logistic burden from sources of supply inside South Vietnam, such as captured Allied ammunition, to sources outside South Vietnam. Thereafter, the Communists were required to send substantial quantities of arms and ammunition to South Vietnam on a continuing basis.

14. In 1965 the headquarters of the 559th relocated from the Hanoi area to the North Vietnamese Panhandle. This move was probably prompted

by the need to provide closer coordination for the surging level of shipments into Laos. By the end of 1965 the 559th had expanded into a truck transportation unit in addition to its portering and personnel infiltration functions.

1966 and 1967

15. During 1966 and 1967 the 559th rapidly expanded both its area of operation and its logistics capability. This expansion underscored both the increasing pace of the war in the South and the increased effectiveness of Operation Market Time which greatly reduced the Communists' capability to infiltrate supplies directly into South Vietnam by sea.

16. To perform this expanded role, the 559th was completely reorganized. By late 1966, its headquarters deployed into the Laotian Panhandle for the first time. Moreover, a series of Binh Trams (BT) were established to replace the 70th and 71st Groups. Each BT had subordinate transportation, engineer, infantry, medical, and air defense elements to insure the expeditious movement and protection of men and material in its area of responsibility. They acted as geographical control authorities for personnel and logistic movement through a specific area. In order to simplify the administrative structure of the new BT system, the route for personnel infiltration was shifted from the western DMZ to the roadnet through Ban Karai Pass.* The T stations formerly subordinate to the 70th and 71st Groups were resubordinated to the various BTs, and additional stations were added to cover the southward expansion of the personnel infiltration route in Laos. The responsibility for personnel moving through the Panhandle on foot remained with the T stations, while the control of truck movements was handled directly by the BTs themselves. This division of responsibilities enhanced the security of the overall system. For example, most of the infiltrated personnel captured in South Vietnam have had very little knowledge of the supply transport system.

* Route 912 was constructed through the Ban Karai Pass in May 1966.

17. During 1966, construction of new roads in the Laotian Panhandle took place at a rapid pace. In addition to Route 912, another new road, Route 911, was constructed, reducing transit distance from the Mu Gia Pass to Tchepone by one-third. This road also intersected with Route 912 coming from Ban Karai. Another new road designated Route 913 was constructed bypassing Tchepone to the south and intersecting with Route 92 just north of Muong Nong. This new route bypassed Ban Dong, the former hub of the infiltration system in the Panhandle. Route 922 running east from Muong Nong was extended east into South Vietnam where it joined Route 548 which ran south via the A Shau Valley. Below Ban Bac, Route 96 was constructed from the terminus of Route 92, running south through Chavane toward the tri-border area of Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam. Just north of the tri-border, Route 96 intersected with another new route, Route 110. Constructed in an east-west direction along the southern border of Laos from the tri-border area to the Se Kong River, Route 110 joined another new road, Route 97, running into Cambodia.

18. Along this rapidly expanding route structure, eight BTs were deployed with the following responsibilities*: BT-1 for the area along Route 911 from just below Mu Gia Pass south to its intersection with Route 912; BT-2 for the route structure from Route 912 south through Tchepone; and BT-3 for movement along Route 92 to its junction with Route 922. Whereas movements from the junction of Routes 922 and 92 to South Vietnam were under the jurisdiction of BT-4, those closer to the South Vietnam border area were controlled by BT-7 located in the A Shau Valley.

19. Although movement along Route 92 south of its junction with Route 922 was also controlled by BT-4 for a short distance, most of this route was controlled by BT-5, located in the Ban Bac area. Movements along Route 96 into and through the Chavane area were the responsibility of BT-6 which also moved men and material into South Vietnam over Route 165/966.

* These eight BTs had a total of 15 transportation battalions, 9 antiaircraft artillery battalions, 13 engineer battalions, and several independent companies.

20. In the southernmost portion of the Laotian Panhandle, BT-8 had the primary mission for receiving and transshipping supplies moving into the Laotian Panhandle from Cambodia. These supplies were forwarded to units operating in the southern Panhandle or to the B-3 Front area of South Vietnam. Some supplies were also moved to BT-8 down Route 96 by BT-6 at Chavane.

21. During the summer wet season of 1967 the headquarters of the 559th and most of its personnel withdrew from the Laotian Panhandle back into North Vietnam. Only a detached element, later known as the Forward Headquarters 559th, remained to conduct housekeeping operations during the wet season. By November the 559th had returned to Laos to begin preparations for the dry season.

22. During the dry season the Communists dramatically increased the flow of men and material to South Vietnam to support the offensive planned for Tet 1968. Most of the personnel and supply shipments were destined for Communist forces operating in I Corps, South Vietnam, which includes Quang Tri, Thua Thien, Quang Nam, Quang Tin, and Quang Ngai Provinces. Prior to the planned offensives, supplies were stockpiled in Laos near the border, both to shorten the supply lines in the Khe Sanh area and to enable the forces to maintain themselves during the offensive. To the south the Communists developed a major logistic complex in the A Shau Valley during 1967 to support forces in the Tri-Thien-Hue Military Region and Military Region 5 in South Vietnam. Supplies moving through the A Shau Valley were destined either for the Hue area or were moved south into Military Region 5 for units operating around Da Nang and further south along the coast. By the end of 1967 the expanded route and logistic structure in the southern Panhandle enabled the Communists to supply arms and ammunition to the B-3 Front overland from North Vietnam.

The 1968 - April 1970 Period

23. High levels of personnel infiltration continued through the summer wet season to provide replacement for the heavy casualties taken by the Communists during the 1968 offensives. To meet this need, most of the 559th's units remained in

the Laotian Panhandle during the wet season for the first time.

24. After the failure of the large offensives of Tet and May and the abortive effort in August 1968, the Communists abandoned the strategy of large unit warfare. They returned to a strategy of protracted warfare centered on indirect attacks by fire rather than large unit engagements. This new strategy relieved some of the strain on the enemy's logistics system, giving him time to rebuild his depleted personnel strength.

25. In the fall of 1968 the 559th was reorganized again. This reorganization was aimed at providing greater redundancy in the Panhandle logistics system because of a sudden and substantial upsurge in the level of Allied air attacks in southern Laos. These attacks disrupted supply movements, causing significant logistic problems for the enemy. In adjusting to this situation the Communists doubled the number of BTs to 16 and reduced somewhat the area of responsibility of each. The BTs were renumbered and were relocated. The transportation, engineering, and antiaircraft strengths of the BTs were increased, new bypass roads were constructed, and a POL pipeline was extended into the Laotian Panhandle through the Mu Gia Pass.

26. By early January 1969 the reinforcement and reorganization of the 559th had enabled the Communists to alleviate many of their logistic problems and resulted in increasingly large numbers of vehicles moving south on the major supply routes. The overall effectiveness of this reorganization was indicated in a message from the Deputy Director of Rear Services in Hanoi to the 559th which stated that the 559th had achieved a great victory and that the volume of supplies moved to South Vietnam had attained a new high in February.

27. By late May 1969 the enemy apparently felt that adequate levels of supplies and personnel had been delivered to their forces in the south. They began to withdraw units of the 559th from the Laotian Panhandle and to close down logistic operations there as they had done in 1967. By July 1969, at least half and probably more of the 559th forces had returned to North Vietnam.

28. During October and November 1969 the headquarters and large numbers of personnel of the 559th returned to the Laotian Panhandle. Initially, activity focused on the restoration of the road-net which was opened for through traffic to South Vietnam by the end of November. An intensive program also was launched for constructing a new access route through the western DMZ area. By December 1969, Route 1036, which now connected the North Vietnamese Panhandle through the Ban Raving Pass with the Tchepone area in Laos, was sustaining vehicle traffic. In addition, the North Vietnamese established a second POL pipeline into the Laotian Panhandle. This one ran through the western DMZ area toward Tchepone. The new western DMZ road and POL pipeline substantially reduced the 559th's logistics burden in the northern Panhandle. Supplies now could be shipped as far south as the DMZ in the sanctuary of North Vietnam, thus reducing their vulnerability to Allied air attack.

29. By early December the logistics system in the Laotian Panhandle was operational and the 559th began a series of "crash" programs to move supplies to South Vietnam. These programs, however, gave way to the "General Transportation Offensive" which continued from December 1969 through April 1970, with shipments at substantially higher levels than ever before.

APPENDIX B

Chronology of Key Events
in the Development
of the 559th Transportation Group

May	1959	The 559th is formed with one operational unit, the 70th Battalion.
Feb	1961	The 70th Battalion is reinforced to a regimental-size unit and redesignated the 70th Group.
Dec	1962	A truckable roadway is completed from Mu Gia Pass into the Laotian Panhandle as far south as Ban Dong.
Feb	1963	Another regimental-size unit, Group 71, is added to the 559th structure.
Fall	1965	The headquarters of the 559th moves from Hanoi into the North Vietnamese Panhandle.
Fall	1965	The roadnet in the Panhandle is extended as far south as Ban Bac.
Fall	1966	Operation Market Time drastically reduces direct sea infiltration of Communist supplies into South Vietnam.
May	1966	A new access route from North Vietnam into the Laotian Panhandle is opened through Ban Karai Pass.
Fall	1966	The roadnet in the Panhandle is extended south of the tri-border of Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam. The roadnet is also extended into Cambodia along the Se Kong River.
Fall	1966	The headquarters of the 559th deploys to the Laotian Panhandle for the first time.

Dry season	1966-1967	The 559th is reorganized with the 70th and 71st Groups being replaced by a series of eight Binh Trams.
Summer	1967	During the wet season the headquarters of the 559th and most of its personnel withdraw from the Panhandle back into North Vietnam, leaving a detached element, later known as the Forward Headquarters 559th, behind to conduct housekeeping operations.
Dry season	1967-1968	The flow of men and material through the 559th system increases dramatically in support of the Tet, May, and August offensives of 1968.
Fall	1968	The 559th reorganizes, and the number of its Binh Trams doubles -- increasing from 8 to 16.
Summer	1968	Most of the 559th remains in the Panhandle during the wet season to handle the high level of personnel infiltration.
Dec	1969	A new access road is constructed from North Vietnam around the western DMZ into the Lao-tian Panhandle.
Summer	1969	The 559th withdraws from the Panhandle during the wet season.
May	1970	The 559th prepares to withdraw from the Panhandle during the wet season but remains in Laos, apparently in response to Allied incursions into Cambodia.
Oct	1970	The Forward Headquarters of the 559th reorganizes into Headquarters Group 470 which takes control of the Binh Trams south of Ban Bac.
Oct-Dec	1970	At least three new Binh Trams numbered 50, 51, and 54 are detected in the southern Panhandle. These units are believed to have the mission of supporting Communist forces in Cambodia.

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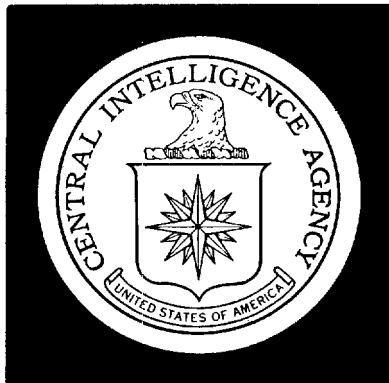
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Intelligence Memorandum

*Stepped-Up Communist Resupply Campaign In Southern Laos
And Cambodia*

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February 1971

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
February 1971

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Stepped-Up Communist Resupply Campaign
In Southern Laos And Cambodia

Summary

Ever since the Allied incursions into Cambodia and the closing of the port of Kompong Som (formerly Sihanoukville) to Communist supplies, it has been apparent that during this dry season Hanoi would be facing its biggest logistic challenge in the Laotian Panhandle to date. During the summer and early fall, there were numerous indications that the Communists recognized this challenge and were taking concrete measures to meet it. These steps included augmenting the logistical and security forces in the Panhandle, establishing new and realigning old logistical commands, and continued expansion of the route system. The kickoff of the North Vietnamese logistical "great general offensive" in the Panhandle occurred on the night of 4 January. Its purpose is to establish a throughput of supplies from North Vietnam to South Vietnam and Cambodia.

As the mid-point of the dry season approaches, it is clear that the Communists are beset with a number of problems and have already suffered several significant setbacks. These problems are:

Note: This memorandum, the fourth in a series analyzing Communist logistical activities in southern Laos and Cambodia since October 1970, was prepared by the Office of Economic Research and coordinated within CIA.

a. The Communist resupply effort got off to a poor start in October because of unexpectedly heavy rains in the Panhandle and intensive bombing of the entry corridors. This caused a month's delay in starting the resupply effort in Laos.

b. The augmentation of Communist security and logistical forces in the Panhandle required a greater logistical effort to prime the system than previously and means that much higher internal supply requirements in the Panhandle -- about 25% greater than last year -- must be met before a major throughput can flow to South Vietnam and Cambodia.

d. NVA/PL forces have failed to clear Allied units from the Bolovens Plateau, probably a prerequisite for heavy use of the new western supply route -- Route 23/16 -- that had been planned by the Communists.

e. Ground interdiction operations by friendly irregular forces introduced an element of uncertainty and concern that Hanoi has not been troubled with in years past.

The above problems in part explain why the indicators of current throughput into South Vietnam or Cambodia are relatively few despite the many indications of high levels of logistical activity along the entry corridors into and within the Panhandle. However, the low level of identified throughput is not entirely unexpected. In part it reflects the normal surging of the system whereby the heavy movement of supplies is first

detected along the entry routes and gradually moves south through the Panhandle and then on the exit routes from Laos. It is still too early to predict how successful the North Vietnamese will be in meeting their current logistic challenge for the season as a whole, but, barring unforeseen circumstances, the indicators of supply throughput should rise significantly within a few weeks.

Logistical Developments in the Laos Panhandle

Recent Organizational Adjustments

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559th Transportation Group (TG), was redesignated Headquarters, 470th TG, following its relocation to the tri-border area in October. At the time of the initial move of the Forward Headquarters from Ban Bac to the Binh Tram 37 area, it was believed that the Forward Headquarters was colocated with the Headquarters, 470th TG. Apparently, the experienced cadre of the 559th TG Forward Headquarters, which supervised logistic operations in the southern Panhandle last dry season, were used to form the command structure of the newly organized group. As a result of the reorganization, the 470th TG now exercises control over Binh Tram 36 south of Chavane, Binh Tram 37 in the tri-border area, and Binh Tram 38 at Ban Phone, in addition to maintaining control over the 50 series of Binh Trams. The 470th TG is now the primary logistics authority in extreme southern Laos and in northern Cambodia. Since early September, some 5,700 personnel have been observed in the infiltration pipeline destined for the 470th TG.

2. Binh Tram 31, which relocated to Route 23/16 (see Figure 1, inside back cover) to establish the new 559th TG-controlled north-south supply corridor through the western Panhandle, may have been split into equal elements recently.

[redacted] the Binh Tram was referred to as Binh Tram 31A and Binh Tram 31B, the Headquarters element probably being A and the Forward Headquarters being B. Such a division would mean that Binh Trams 31A and B would function as autonomous entities -- a reasonable step because of the great distance between Binh Tram 31 and Binh Tram 38, particularly if the Communists still plan to move large quantities of supplies via the Route 23/16 corridor.

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3. In mid-January, the 83rd Engineer Regiment with 700 personnel was observed moving south through the Chavane area. The regiment, which operated in the central Panhandle last dry season, is destined to be subordinate to the B-3 Front. A relocation to the Western Highlands of South Vietnam (the B-3 Front's normal area of operations) would be highly unusual because of the continued need for additional construction along the Route 110/97 road complex into northern Cambodia toward Stung Treng. Thus the regiment may be earmarked for construction duty with B-3 Front elements that were shifted to Laos or Cambodia -- either along Route 110 or in the Stung Treng area. Alternatively, if assigned to South Vietnam, the relocation may indicate that the Communists intend to open a second major overland route south through Cambodia from the Binh Tram 37 area. In any event, accelerated road construction in extreme southern Laos and/or northern Cambodia is likely in the near future.

Status of Logistical Facilities

4. The Communists continued to restore and improve parts of their Panhandle logistics system in December and January. By early January the system appeared fully operational, as evidenced by the following developments:

- Additional bypasses had been built in the entry corridors;
- A new north-south artery, Route 99, was opened south of Muong Nong;

- Much of Route 23/16 had been opened;
- Waterborne supply shipments had resumed on the Se Bang Hieng and Se Kong; and
- Most exit routes into South Vietnam and Cambodia were reopened and were being lightly used.

5. In December the observed truck traffic in the Panhandle was largely concentrated between the four entry points and the Tchepone-Muong Nong staging areas, with enemy trucks mainly using the heavily canopied western routes, permitting operations during daylight hours. In early January, aerial reconnaissance recorded a surge of logistic traffic from North Vietnam and along the major roads and waterways into southern Laos. The four access routes from North Vietnam showed increasingly heavy truck traffic moving across the border. Sightings of large numbers of trucks in North Vietnam headed south toward Laos became more frequent. On 12 January, waterborne shipments of supplies on the Se Bang Hieng flowing out of the Western DMZ resumed. Pilots observed 200-300 containers floating in the river -- the first indication of use of this river since the channel guide system was rebuilt in early December.

6. During the week ending 4 January, a number of developments reflected increasing activity further south in the Panhandle. Enemy lines of communication south of the Tchepone-Muong Nong staging areas began evidencing heavy use according to aerial reconnaissance: for the first time this dry season, lines of communication south of Ban Bac began to reflect heavy truck traffic. Route 92/96 still appears to be the primary artery into extreme southern Laos. Forward air controllers (FACs) began reporting fresh repair activity and road grading along Route 96 and parts of Route 110. They also reported construction of a channel guide control system along a 40-50 mile long segment of the Se Kong between Ban Bac and Ban Phone.

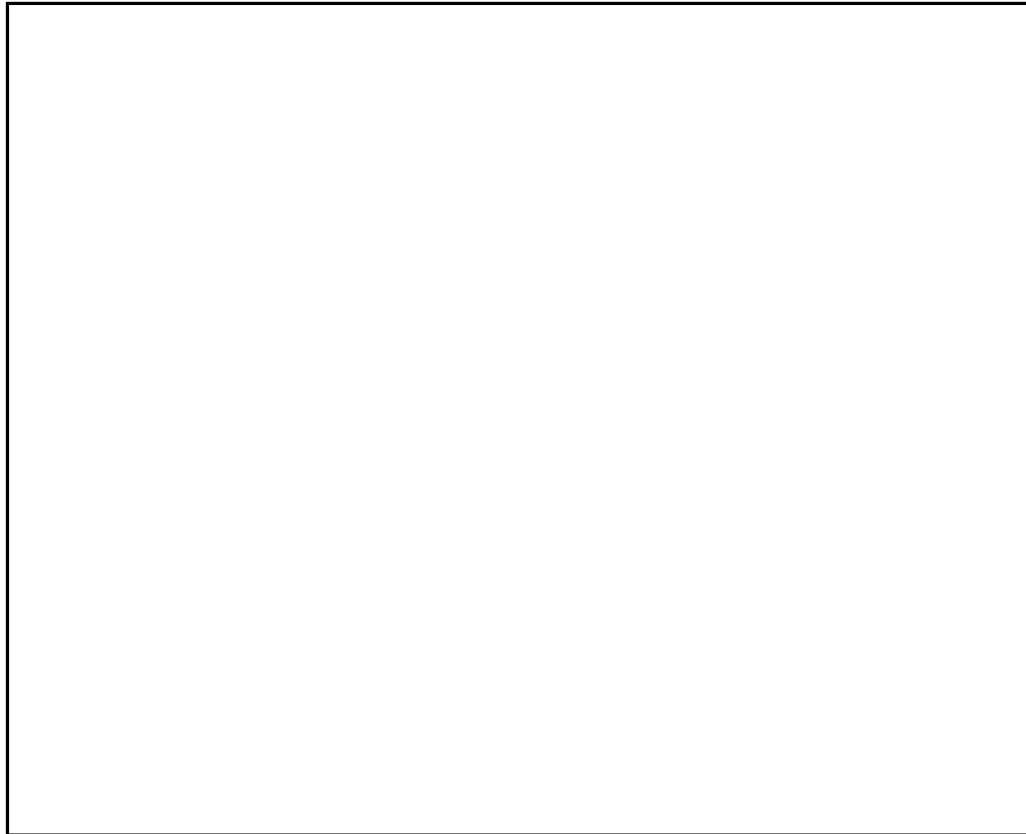
Newly constructed Route 99 between Muong Nong and Ban Bac also reflected increasing activity. New truck pull-offs and connector roads continued to be built, numerous antiaircraft positions were prepared along the route, and two new ferry crossings were constructed to provide access across the Se Kong to the Route 92/96 corridor.

7. Recent reports on the status of Route 23/16 are scarce, but villagers living between Saravane and Ban Thateng have reported substantial numbers of trucks carrying supplies moving southward. Most of the vehicle activity detected on Route 23/16 thus far this dry season probably has been in support of enemy operations against friendly positions on and near the Bolovens Plateau. In late December, FACs reported that a 20-mile long bypass road had been recently re-opened west of Saravane, making the route motorable from Muong Phine to Ban Phone. However, aerial reconnaissance in late December over the southern parts of Route 23/16 (north of Ban Phone) continued to reflect only light vehicle use. South of Ban Phone the routes were not being used by vehicles. Concurrent with the resumption of use of the Se Bang Hieng, pilots began detecting numerous floating bundles in the Se Kong between Ban Bac and Ban Phone. These supplies (probably rice) presumably are transshipped to trucks or boats near Ban Phone and sent to dispersed storage sites or moved directly to the Cambodian border.

8. Aerial reconnaissance during January along the Laotian-South Vietnamese border indicated that all the motorable exit routes* were open. Reporting by FACs indicates that Route 926 leading toward the A Shau Valley has been sustaining traffic on both sides of the border since mid-December. Route 922 has evidenced the sharpest surge in exit route activity: heavy sustained vehicle use was reported by FACs during the first week of January. Exit Routes 925 and 165/966 also were reported in

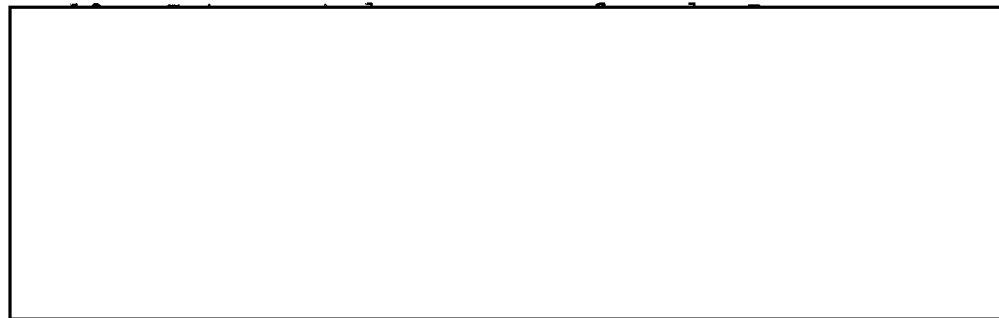
** Late December photography continued to show Route 9 east of the Route 9/92 junction to be in disuse and heavily overgrown. Considerable work would have to be done to make the road motorable.*

good condition, but as of mid-January showed little sign of vehicle activity near the border, as did that part of Route 110 leading toward South Vietnam.



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A similar curtailment in transport activity was also noted at the same time last year, just prior to the big transportation push.



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This year's offensive began at the same time as last year's, indicating that the logistics advantage gained by leaving most of the 559th TG

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in the Panhandle during the 1970 wet season was lost, probably because of the unusual heavy rains in the latter half of October and intensified US bombing.

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12. Further south in the Panhandle, logistic activity also picked up considerably with the initiation of the "general offensive." Binh Tram 41 shipped 68 tons of supplies to South Vietnam via Route 926/616 from 30 December through 20 January. Binh Tram 33 received 120 tons of supplies on 8 and 9 January. Binh Tram 31, which also was participating in the offensive, was recently praised by the 559th TG for outstanding accomplishments. Apparently, the North Vietnamese will attempt to move trucks south from Binh Tram 31 through Binh Tram 38 despite the continued government presence on the Bolovens Plateau. Waterway shipments on the Se Kong are also being used to supplement vehicle activity. Substantial quantities of rice are being transported by water from Binh Tram 35 to Binh Tram 38. Binh Tram 37 was congratulated on 27 January for having achieved 100% of its transportation quota for the B-3 Front for an unspecified period. [REDACTED]

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13. The overall composition of cargo detected moving during the early stages of the offensive indicates a decrease in emphasis on food and a priority on gasoline shipments. Of the 2,811 tons of supplies shipped from Binh Tram 14 to Binh Tram 32 for the period 1-20 January, 1,549 tons -- 55% -- was food, a sharp decrease from the 77% of total shipments noted moving during late November and early December. POL, on the other hand, accounted for 31% -- 865 tons -- of the total, well above the dry season average of about 15%. Arms, equipment, and ammunition shipments accounted for 397 tons -- 14% -- substantially below the 20%-25% noted in previous dry seasons.

14. Despite the large volume of supplies moving into the Panhandle from North Vietnam in early January, the enemy continues to have difficulties operating his logistic system. Transportation difficulties were evident along the Se Bang Hieng when shipments were halted for three days between two points as a result of air strikes. A similar situation occurred on the Se Kong where air strikes on a transshipment point on 13 January destroyed cargo nets requiring two days to repair.

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15. The largest quantity of cargo ever destroyed by air strikes in the Panhandle

Allied air strikes against the "H-1 warehouse" near Ban Bac, the largest known storage facility in the southern Panhandle, destroyed 900 tons of supplies and forced the Communists to abandon the facility. Following in the wake of the one-month delay in launching their dry season supply push, the neutralization of H-1 in this critical area of the Panhandle was a further setback for the North Vietnamese.

16. The failure to secure the Bolovens Plateau, which would have permitted complete use of the western route structure, apparently has

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forced some change in the North Vietnamese transportation effort.

The route was scheduled to carry 60% of all supply shipments from Binh Tram 33 to Binh Tram 34 south of Muong Nong for an unspecified period. Construction of this route probably was accelerated to facilitate movement of large quantities of supplies initially scheduled for transport on the western Route 23/16 corridor. Although the North Vietnamese are still attempting to use the western corridor during the current offensive, Routes 99 and 92/96 will probably carry most of the cargo moving into the southern Panhandle for at least the next month or so.

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17. The move by the Communists to use Route 99 is being contested. On 13 January, four government irregular battalions and four special teams, a total of about 1,000 troops, were inserted by helicopter and attacked Route 99 southwest of Muong Nong.

Additional security forces as well as the 141st Regiment were moved into the area with orders to engage the "enemy" and clear the area of government irregulars. A sustained Allied presence along the Route 99 complex could have a serious disruptive effect on the amount of supplies being transported and the timing and coordination of the supply offensive.

Other Sources

18. Sensor detections surged sharply on 5 January with the start of the "general offensive" and through 15 January averaged 1,160 detections per day -- slightly higher than a year ago (see Figure 2). Since then, however, they have dropped below last year's level. This has occurred despite the fact that the number of active sensors in place has increased substantially -- 1,036 currently, compared with 550 in

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mid-January last year. As the enemy shifts his traffic to counter US bombing, the frequency of detections shifts also, particularly on the main entry corridors into the Panhandle where extreme fluctuations in detections occur. Since 5 January, there also has been a sharp increase in detections in the southern Panhandle, notably on Route 92 north of Ban Bac and on its bypass, Route 99. Sensor-detected truck traffic on the roads south of Chavane has been sporadic and light. Pilot sightings of trucks in the Panhandle also are below last year's level: overall, sightings through 22 January were down some 20%, but much of the shortfall may be attributed to a substantial decrease in attack sorties from last year's level.*

Developments in Cambodia

19. Although evidence of current enemy supply flows into Cambodia continues to be sketchy and incomplete, recent developments along Route 97 and the Tonle Kong in the Laos-Cambodia border area suggest that supply inputs into Cambodia from southern Laos may be increasing. Aerial photography of late December and January indicated that Route 97 -- the Cambodian extension of Laotian Route 110 and a key input corridor -- had been refurbished by the enemy and had begun to sustain light to moderate traffic. The photography showed that new truck parks, transshipment points, bypasses, and supply/storage areas had been developed.

truck traffic moving in both directions throughout the night. The Tonle Kong, which parallels Route 97 and has been frequently used by the VC/NVA in the past, was also active during the period. New road-water transshipment points were evident in photography along its banks, and about 700 supply containers were noted free-floating down the river north of Siem Pang. substantiate enemy supply activity in the area

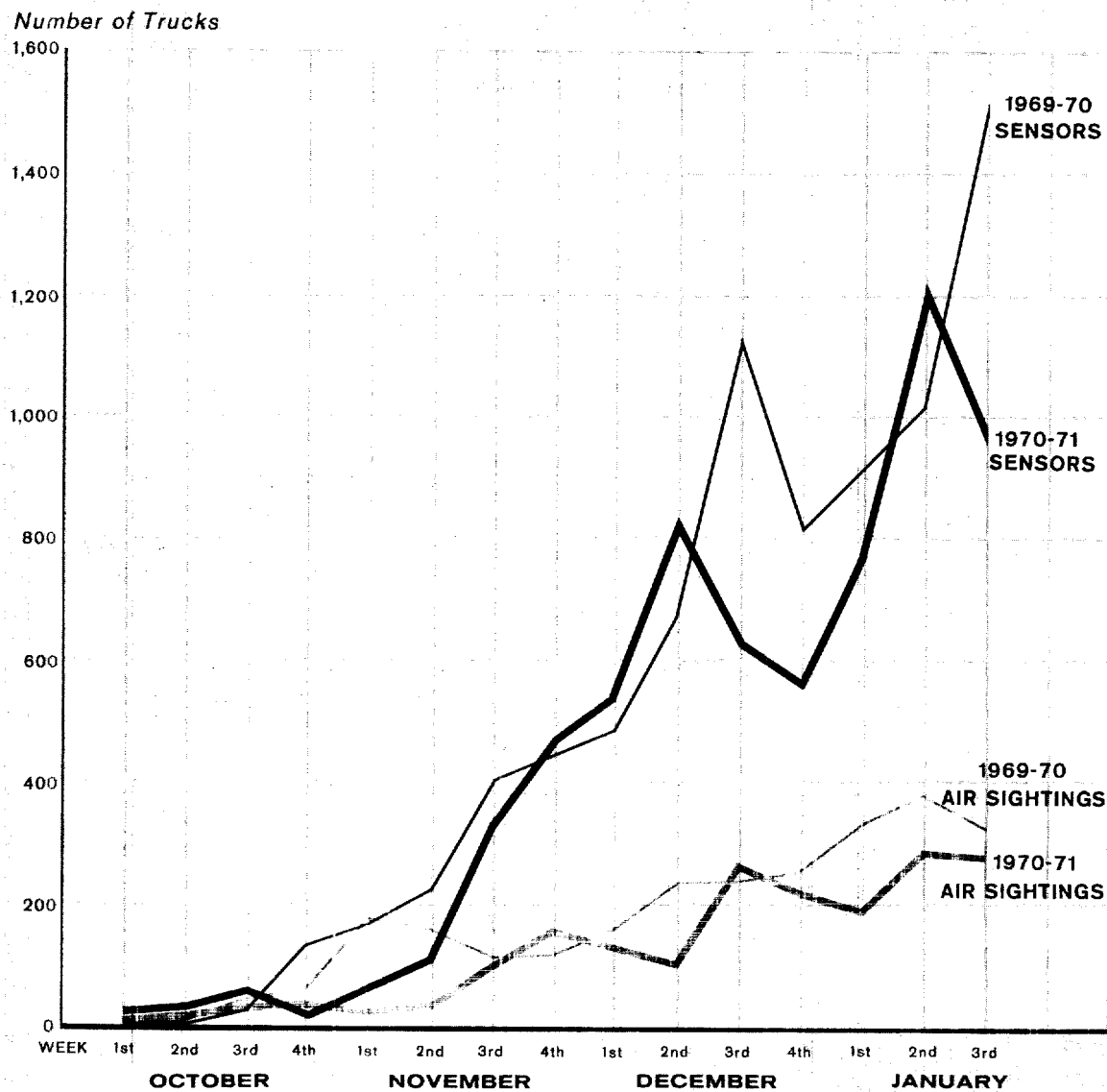
* Attack sorties in December -- the latest period for which data are available -- were 17% below those of a year earlier.

Figure 2

ENEMY TRUCK DETECTIONS IN THE LAOTIAN PANHANDLE

1 October to 22 January, 1969-70 and 1970-71

NOTE: Points on the graph represent daily average of detections per week. Data are plotted in weekly increments. Numbers of trucks are shown without regard to direction of movement or location. Each method of detection includes unavoidable multiple counting.



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Route 97* and the Tonle Kong have been used to move medicine, ordnance, and food into Cambodia from Attopeu since at least September. Siem Pang, where additional storage facilities have been noted in photography, and Stung Treng have been reported as central supply points from which goods radiate via truck, watercraft, oxcart, and bicycle to Kompong Cham, Kompong Thom, and Kratie in the south and Virachei and the B-3 Front to the east.

20. In related developments, aerial photography of 28 December and 8 January showed new clearing activity along segments of secondary roads and trails in northern Cambodia. One area involved is on the east bank of the Mekong about 25 miles south of Stung Treng. This clearing activity probably is a bypass around the 20-mile long Sambor Rapids, a navigable but treacherous segment of the Mekong. The development of this probable bypass suggests that the enemy intends to increase his use of the Mekong south of the evolving Route 97/Tonle Kong corridor into the Kratie-Chhlong area. Extensive clearing has also been noted along portions of trails north of Stung Treng. One alignment forms a bypass for part of Route 13 just south of the Laos border and the other (west of the Mekong) heads northeast off Route 126 toward the river into an area of reported enemy supply facilities. The strategic location of these new segments generally follows past patterns of enemy logistic improvements in Laos and North Vietnam where several routes are developed around a key corridor to increase overall capability and decrease the effectiveness of any interdiction efforts.

21. The available evidence clearly indicates that the enemy has improved his overall transport capability and is probably filtering increased quantities of supplies into Cambodia. Increased security and logistic support for this important corridor also was provided in early January when the 52nd Regiment of the NVA 320th Division relocated from southern Laos to northwest Stung

* 8 January aerial photography indicated that the motorable limit of Route 97 was about 11 miles north of Siem Pang.

Treng Province, joining the 24th and 28th NVA Regiments which have been there since last summer.

22. In southeast Cambodia, no changes in the Communist logistic apparatus have been noted since early December. Groups 300, 400, and 500 (and Rear Service Groups 50 and 82, which moved west into Cambodia at the time of the Allied incursions) are still believed to be operating in the Kratie-Chhlong area. The 41st Transportation Regiment -- first observed in November -- operates south of Chhlong into the Parrot's Beak, an area where large-scale enemy logistic operations, supply points, and rice collection efforts have been noted. A recent rallier has indicated that COSVN intends to consolidate the VC/NVA position in the provinces of Kompong Cham, Prey Veng, and Svay Rieng and to "control" Kompong Cham City. Control of this region would enable the VC/NVA to put continued pressure on Phnom Penh and to extend operations west of the Mekong as well as providing access to Military Regions 3 and 4 in South Vietnam. To date, the enemy has been able to achieve relatively free movement in this region* and has been successful in establishing a fledgling command/control apparatus for further dry season activity. Although continued ARVN incursions in this region have kept the Communists off balance and forced them to allocate units to protect certain areas, they probably have not seriously disrupted enemy logistic movements.

23. Seaborne supply flows into Kampot and Takeo Provinces of Cambodia and Military Region 4 in South Vietnam were recently reported [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the movement of large numbers of trucks both north and south at night. In November, about 150 trucks, some heavily loaded, were heard during five nights on Route 13, while in December, about 70 were heard over a period of about one week moving in the same area. This activity was probably related to rice collection and redistribution efforts in Prey Veng and Svay Rieng Provinces.

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[redacted] during the past several months the Communists have moved supplies by sea to their forces in South Vietnam's Military Region 4 and in the adjacent Cambodian province of Kampot. [redacted]

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[redacted] ordnance and medical supplies are moved by motorized junks from Phu Quoc Island in the Gulf of Thailand to the Pirate Islands about nine miles off the coast. The shipments are then broken down into smaller quantities and moved inland via shallow-draft sampans on the maze of rivers in the region, with some goods distributed to intermediate points along the way. The final destination reportedly is the central supply depot at Kompong Svay in Kampot Province which serves as the main supply/storage point for enemy units there and in South Vietnam's Kien Giang Province.

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[redacted] motorized junks carry rice and ammunition to offloading points along the Kien Giang coast, [redacted]

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[redacted] The amount of supplies being moved probably is small in view of the continued Market Time patrol of the area.

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24. In summary, logistic developments in Cambodia during December and January revealed the first evidence of Communist supply inputs -- still unquantifiable -- into Cambodia and preliminary enemy efforts to improve key Cambodian lines of communication to accommodate increased supply flows in the future. These developments are closely related to the launching of the 559th TG's "general offensive" in Laos in early January and indicate that the logistic network in Cambodia may soon be a viable extension of the Laotian network in support of supply movements to the COSVN area.



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DIRECTORATE OF
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Intelligence Memorandum

*Communists Launch Dry Season Resupply Campaign
In Southern Laos And Cambodia*

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ER IM 70-190

December 1970

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Approved For Release 2006/03/06 : CIA-RDP78T02095R000400030001-2

Approved For Release 2006/03/06 : CIA-RDP78T02095R000400030001-2

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
December 1970

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Communists Launch Dry Season Resupply Campaign
In Southern Laos And Cambodia

Introduction

This memorandum is the third in a series analyzing recent Communist logistical activity in southern Laos and Cambodia. In the last memorandum,* issued in November, we stated that the heavy rains and intensified US air interdiction effort which coincided in mid-October with the planned kickoff phase of the 1970-71 dry season had set the enemy's logistical effort back at least a month. We concluded, however, that despite the setbacks imposed by poor weather and bombing, the Communist logistics system in southern Laos was in better condition than it was last year at the same time, when thousands of logistic personnel were still moving through the Panhandle returning to their area of operations. This memorandum brings our last report up to date.

* *ER IM 70-170*, Recent Communist Logistical Developments In Southern Laos And Cambodia, November 1970, [REDACTED]

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Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA. It was prepared by the Office of Economic Research and was coordinated with the Office of Current Intelligence and the Director's Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs.

Logistical Developments in the Laos Panhandle*Status of Logistical Facilities*

1. During November and through mid-December, the North Vietnamese continued to upgrade their transport system in the Panhandle. They spent the first ten days of November repairing the extensive damage caused by the bombing and the unexpected heavy rains in the second half of October. Flooding and mudslides had temporarily brought logistics activity to a virtual standstill, causing an interruption in their resupply timetable. By mid-November the road net appeared fully recovered to Ban Bac, and extensive construction work was under way on suspected new support and storage facilities along the routes south of the entry corridors in Laos. Construction of a 60-mile long new western bypass route around Ban Bac and a new route parallel to Route 165 east of Chavane neared completion (see Figure 1, inside back cover). During early December, a new connector road between Routes 1032B and 925 -- which will improve access to the Khe Sanh area of South Vietnam -- also was detected by forward air controllers (FACs) under construction. FACs report that a continuous channel guide system* on the Se Bang Hieng now extends from the DMZ some 30 miles to the outskirts of Tchepone, probably presaging the resumption of large-scale waterborne supply shipments into Tchepone. Further south, segments of Routes 23 and 23/16 -- previously in disuse -- showed signs of considerable traffic. FACs and friendly guerrilla units have seen or heard trucks considerably south of Saravane, an early indication of active use of the western route structure in the weeks ahead.

[redacted] thus far this dry season the Communists have made only minimal use of their principal motorable roads -- Routes 922 and 165/966 -- exiting into Military Regions I and II

* The North Vietnamese have cleared channels through sections of the river containing rapids, and have constructed dams to increase the depth of other sections. They have installed channel guides and catch basins made from bamboo to guide the floating supplies downstream to water-to-road transshipment points.

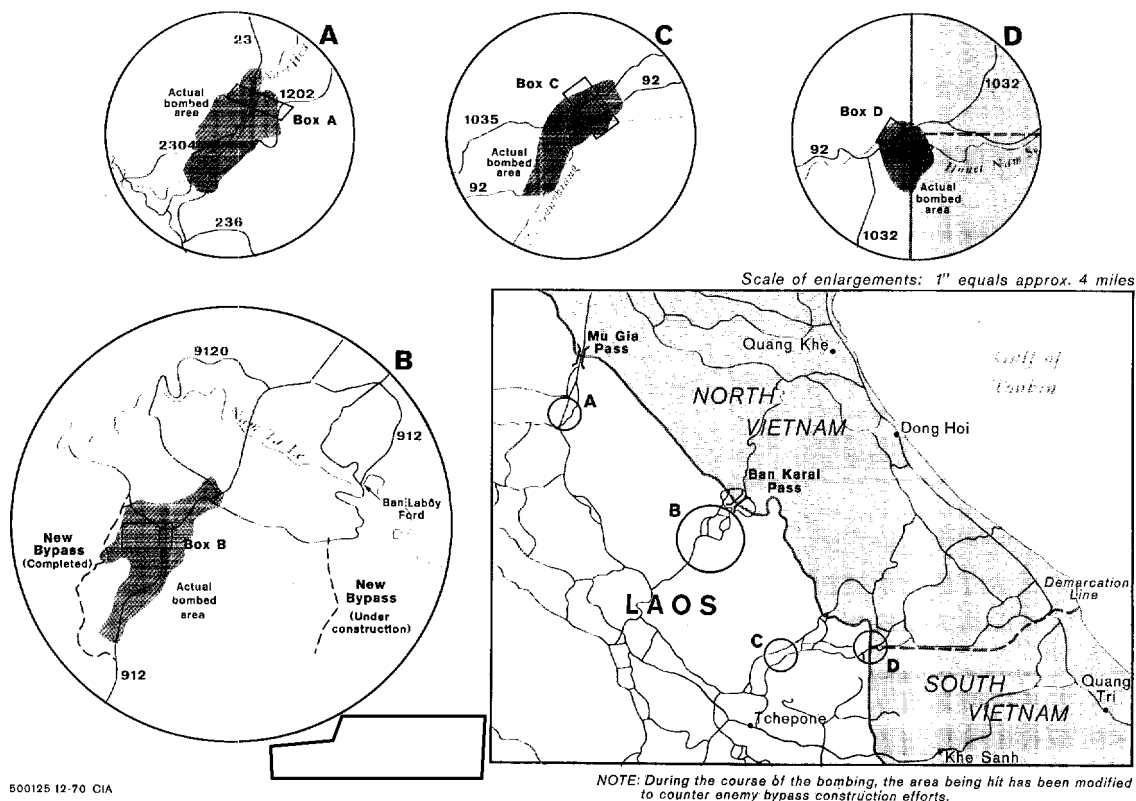
in South Vietnam for the movement of supplies. Inadequate coverage -- particularly aerial reconnaissance -- prevents an assessment of enemy use of other exit routes 925, 9, 926, and 110.

Effects of US Bombing

2. Since early October, Allied fighter bombers and B-52s have carried out continuous concentrated bombing of four target areas (target boxes) on the main entry routes into the Panhandle from North Vietnam -- the Mu Gia and Ban Karai Passes and the western DMZ network -- in an effort to restrict the flow of enemy supplies. By the end of November, between 100 and 150 tactical air sorties and about 25 B-52 sorties were being flown daily against the target boxes* (see Figure 2).

INTERDICTION BOXES ON COMMUNIST ENTRY CORRIDORS

Figure 2



* Representing about 65% of the total Allied bombing effort in southern Laos.

During the first half of November there was evidence that the bombing of the boxes was disrupting enemy traffic; vehicles moving through Mu Gia and Ban Karai were forced to unload above the target boxes, and their cargo was shuttled through the bombed area by porters, bicycles, or animal carts and then stored or reloaded on trucks for movement further south. By mid-November, however, the Communists adjusted to the bombing, and repairs were being speedily made. Aerial reconnaissance indicates that since the start of a heavy flow of supplies into southern Laos in mid-month, Communist trucks have been moving directly through the boxes with apparently little difficulty. In addition, reports of aerial observers [redacted] which reflect heavy levels of traffic both above and below the boxes confirm that trucks are moving through the boxes relatively unimpeded. [redacted]

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[redacted] This traffic pattern indicates that the bombing does disrupt traffic by creating the need for periods of concentrated repair activity, followed by a surge of trucks moving through the targeted area.

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Other Sources

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11. [redacted] pilot reports of truck sightings in the Panhandle have increased considerably since the beginning of October and especially since the launching of the dry season supply push in mid-November (see Figure 3). Reflecting the difficulties caused by the bombing and heavy rains during the last half of October, however, [redacted] generally remained below 1969 levels until late November when they surpassed those levels.

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[redacted] Pilot sightings of trucks in the first half of December, however, dropped 38% below those recorded last year at this time. We cannot explain this sudden drop on the basis of lower sortie rates (in fact, sortie rates increased by at least 24% through the first 12 days of December). Nor can it be explained by a shift from truck-killing to chokepoint bombing or weather. The same conditions in respect to each were operative in November as well as December, but the seeming anomaly reinforces our belief that sensor detections are the better gross indicator of logistical activity in the Panhandle.

total length of the pipeline now is about 100 miles. It runs south from the newly found northern terminus, around the western corner of the DMZ, and into southern Laos southward 55 miles to Muong Nong. This pipeline will relieve one of the enemy's perennial logistics problems -- that of supplying the fuel needs of much of his vehicle fleet on a regular basis rather than placing dependence primarily on truck transport which is more vulnerable to bombing and inclement weather.

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Enhanced Security and Logistics Forces

12. The Communist presence in the Panhandle since April has been enhanced by the input of more than 16,000 combat and logistical personnel from North Vietnam and the deployment of at least 6,000 combat forces from Military Regions I and II in South Vietnam -- a total augmentation of more than 22,000 personnel.*

13. If the Communists are to use the new western Panhandle corridor (Routes 23/16) they must control the crucial eastern and southern parts of the Bolovens Plateau. The eastern ridge of the plateau overlooks the southern part of the projected western route including Route 16 and the Se Kong south of the junction of Routes 16 and 165. To achieve security for the movement of supplies over the southern part of the route, the Communists have massed one of their largest concentrations of troops in southern Laos in the area of the plateau. As of mid-December, at least one Pathet Lao and six North Vietnamese Army battalions were in the areas north and east of the plateau. These forces recently wrested control of most of the eastern ridge from government units; Communist control at some points now extends as much as nine miles west of Route 16. Although part of the Bolovens Plateau has been taken by the Communists, other segments of the new western route north of the plateau have not been made completely secure. For example, in early December a government irregular team near Route 23, about 10 miles northwest of Saravane, clashed with a Communist unit and later observed three trucks moving south on Route 23.

* Including troops in combat units and infiltration groups but excluding casualties. To protect their lines of communications, the Communists also probably have introduced tanks into the Panhandle.

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Enemy Supply Requirements

14. The Communists will have to send substantially more supplies into the Laotian Panhandle this dry season than last year merely to maintain the force structure and level of combat of recent months in southern South Vietnam and Cambodia. Supply losses to the Allied cross-border incursions in Cambodia during May and June, the wet season depletion of stocks, the loss of the Kompong Som supply corridor, and the need to supply increased tactical and rear services forces all mean that increased quantities of supplies must be moved through the system. The augmentation of the combat and logistics support forces in the Panhandle has increased supply requirements by a minimum of 25% in southern Laos.*

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16. Requirements for AAA ammunition will probably increase this year. During October and November, Communist AAA capabilities in the Panhandle were improved.

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In addition, the expanded

* The 25% increase in requirements does not make any allowance for the still emerging logistics structure in northeast Cambodia.

force levels will generate increased POL requirements, especially in the southern part of the Panhandle and Cambodia. This year the petroleum pipeline that now extends deep into the Panhandle will ease the problem of POL availability. The capacity of the pipeline is 1,000 tons daily and, when fully operational, it should easily supply the enemy's increased requirements. Small amounts of POL possibly acquired from Cambodian sources or purchased on the open market in southern Laos also may help the Communists to meet this requirement.

Developments in Cambodia

17. Information on enemy supply flows and the emerging VC/NVA logistic system in Cambodia continues to be extremely limited.* Since early November there have been few changes detected in the evolving enemy logistic structure. Group 470 and its subordinate Binh Trams are believed to be responsible for the logistics network between the 559th Transportation Group in Laos and COSVN, but little information has been received which would clarify their role relative to other recently formed logistic entities further south in Cambodia. It is expected that the Binh Trams of Group 470 probably will appear along the Mekong - Route 13 corridor at least as far south as Kratie or Chhlong, thus connecting Group 470 with COSVN and other logistic entities in the area. Elements of the B-3 Front continue to operate in the northeast along Route 19 and at Stung Treng.

18. Large-scale enemy supply movements in northern Cambodia have not been identified and the

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route system appears only lightly used, but there are indications that the enemy is active in the area. Recent visual reconnaissance by FACs of the lines of communication between Kratie and Laos (the Mekong and Route 13) and Routes 19 and 194 east of Stung Treng to South Vietnam indicate only light traffic. West of the Mekong, pilots reported that Route 12 from Laos to Route 69 -- a distance of about 25 miles -- was in poor condition with craters and water standing in spots. Route 69 east of Route 12 to Choam Ksan reportedly was in good condition but showed no signs of activity. The route system east of Route 12 to the Mekong at Stung Treng was generally deteriorated and no traffic was observed. Photography of late November, however, indicated the enemy may be attempting to reopen Route 97 from southern Laos into Cambodia. Intermittent clearing was noted on segments north of Siempang near Laos. Reopening of Route 97 would provide the enemy an alternative to the Tonle Kong, currently the primary enemy access route from Laos into Cambodia.

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19. Another indication of Communist activity in northern Cambodia has been rice collection efforts near Stung Treng, where villagers reportedly have been required to provide rice for arriving NVA troops. Since the end of the Allied incursions, [redacted] rice and other supplies have moved north on the Tonle Kong toward Laos, or up the Se San from Stung Treng to Virachei where it has been transshipped east probably to the B-3 Front.

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20. In southern Cambodia, logistic organizations recently formed between Kratie and the Parrot's Beak -- Groups 300, 400, and 500 and the 41st Transportation Regiment -- and Rear Service Group 82 continue to support heavy enemy troop concentrations in the area. [redacted]

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[redacted] the enemy is organizing a rice acquisition and transport network in the

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rice-rich regions of Prey Veng and Svay Rieng Provinces (Parrot's Beak area). The Communists have established rice collection centers on the Mekong near Chup where local rice is assembled and then transported north on the Mekong via motorized sampans at least as far as Kratie and Chhlong, and possibly Stung Treng.

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It is not clear whether the bulk of the collected rice may be moving south of Kratie via Route 13* toward border base areas, north toward Stung Treng and the rice-deficit northeast, or may be an internal redistribution of food in the region of the enemy's heaviest troop concentrations.

21. Other supply activity in southern Cambodia reported by low-level sources and ralliers include:

- the movement of rice, other foodstuffs, and medicine from the Parrot's Beak into Base Area 354;
- the movement of rice into the Fishhook via Route 7; and
- a flow of weapons from the Parrot's Beak into base areas in Kampot and Takeo Provinces.

In addition, a rallier [redacted] near the Fishhook indicated that since the Allied incursions the flow of rice and weapons to his

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* *FACs have reported two suspect enemy cargo boats apparently offloading supplies at Kratie in early November, which may presage increased use of the Mekong as a logistic channel.*

unit had been severely restricted and that the unit no longer maintained weapons caches. Rear Service Group 50 operating in the northern Fishhook, however, reportedly still had several weapons caches near Base Area 352 that were undisturbed by the incursions. FACs report that the trails and roads in these areas are being heavily used by bicycles, motorcycles with trailers, oxcarts, and porters.

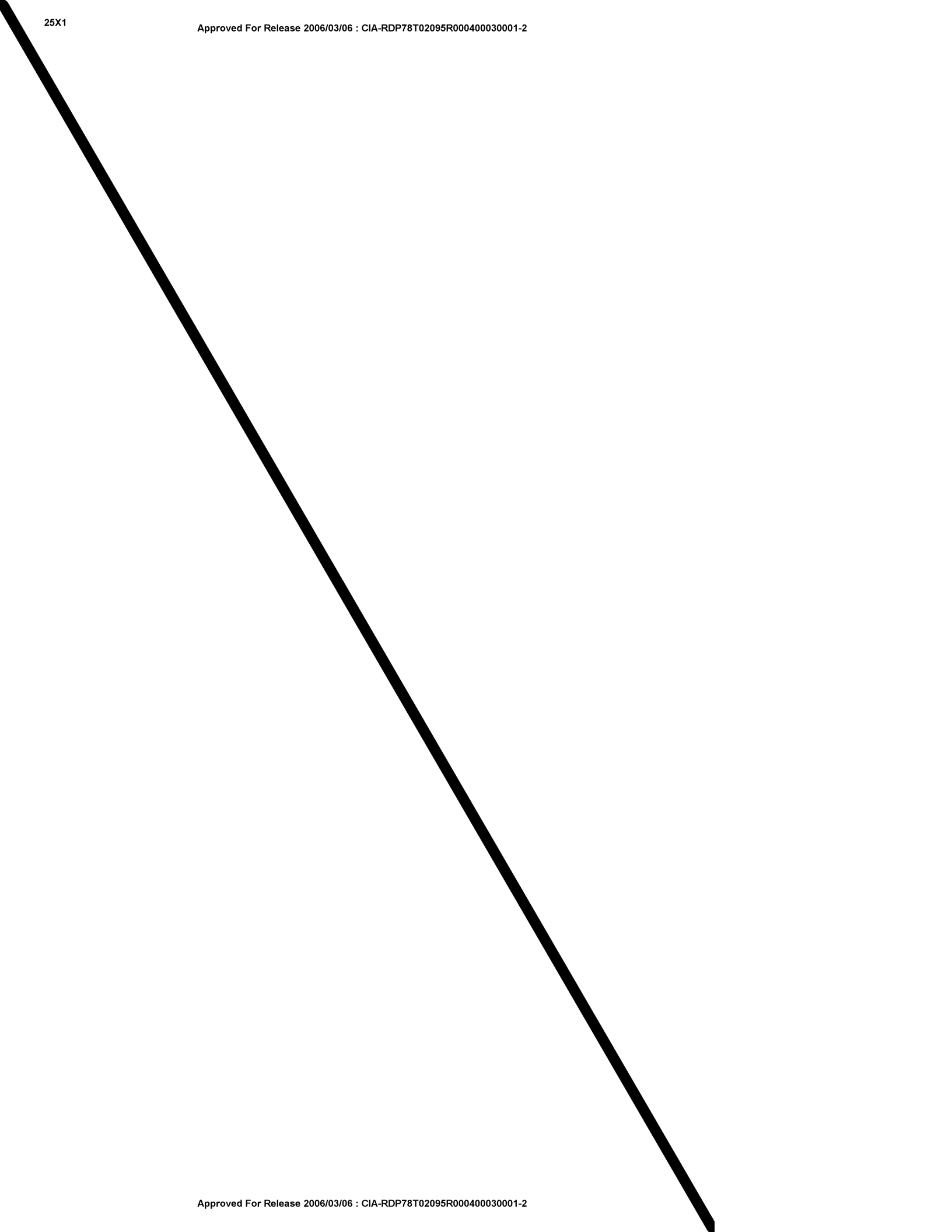
22. Continued reporting of enemy logistic activity in the Parrot's Beak area and in Prey Veng and Kompong Cham Provinces immediately to the north -- where most of the enemy's troops are located and where rice is plentiful -- and the corresponding lack of large-scale enemy logistic activity in northern Cambodia suggest that activity in the Parrot's Beak is indicative of shuttling movements of recently harvested rice and supplies which were undiscovered by the Allies in the incursions rather than of supplies newly arrived via the overland route through Laos.

Conclusions

23. By mid-November the Communist roadnet in the Laotian Panhandle had dried out, damage caused by weather and US bombing had been repaired, and the 1970-71 dry season resupply campaign was launched -- one month later than originally scheduled. By 21 November, at least 12 Binh Trams were involved in the southward movement of supplies. All three entry routes from North Vietnam were being used, resulting in a relatively high level of logistics activity in the northern part of the Panhandle.

24. The tempo of activity accelerated sharply with the initiation of a Panhandle-wide crash program on 5 December. A sharp surge in vehicle activity was detected as far south as Ban Bac, and by 14 December vehicle activity had been detected as far south as the Cambodian border. Transportation activity should continue to increase in the next few weeks. Because of the altered logistic

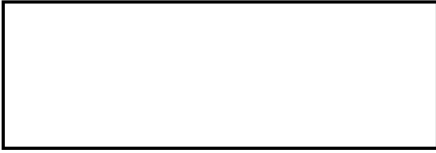
situation this year, the relatively large volume of supplies moving into the extreme southern Panhandle during the remainder of December will probably comprise mainly POL, rice, and other supplies needed by the new logistic organization -- Group 470 -- and its associated Binh Trams in Laos and Cambodia (some supplies, particularly rice, may also be obtained from Cambodian sources). Until this process of refurbishment is completed, the throughput of supplies to COSVN and deep into Cambodia will be delayed, and major amounts of supplies moving well out of Laos will probably not occur until around mid-January 1971.



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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

*Recent Communist Logistical Developments
In Southern Laos And Cambodia*

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Top Secret

ER IM 70-170

November 1970

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Approved For Release 2006/03/06 : CIA-RDP78T02095R000400030001-2

Approved For Release 2006/03/06 : CIA-RDP78T02095R000400030001-2

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
November 1970

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Recent Communist Logistical Developments
In Southern Laos And Cambodia

Introduction

This memorandum analyzes Communist logistical activity in southern Laos and Cambodia since the issuance in October of ER IM 70-147.* In that report, we concluded that the 559th Transportation Group, the key logistical entity in southern Laos, had remained in the Panhandle during the summer wet months as a reaction to the Allied incursions into Cambodia in May and June, as a precautionary move against possible major Allied ground operations in southern Laos, and to begin preparations for an early start in moving supplies when the dry season arrived. We also indicated that in order to move sufficient supplies to cover past activity levels in South Vietnam and to continue operations in Cambodia, the Communists would have to move more supplies this dry season than ever before and that this would require the expansion of the existing system, including substantially increased numbers of logistical manpower. We pointed out that the enemy had made much progress in these preparations and that the

* ER IM 70-147, Communist Logistical Developments In Southern Laos And Cambodia During The 1970 Wet Season, October 1970.

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Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA. It was prepared by the Office of Economic Research and was coordinated with the Office of Current Intelligence and the Director's Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs.

Communists appeared ready, barring unforeseen difficulties, to begin their dry season operations as planned by mid-October. Since then the Communists have been hit by both heavy rains and an intensified US bombing campaign, which have placed new obstacles to their original plans. This memorandum brings our earlier report up to date.

Logistical Developments in the Laos Panhandle

Further Organizational Adjustments

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2. To coordinate the movement of supplies from the Laos border area into Cambodia, the North Vietnamese have implemented a new Transportation Group -- Group 470 -- which was probably established (at least on paper) in April 1970.*

* *The 559th Transportation Group was established in May (the fifth month) 1959. Thus we believe the Group 470 was formed in April 1970.*

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Its Headquarters appears to be in southern Laos in the general area of the Forward Headquarters 559th Transportation Group. Since late September, at least 2,000 personnel of those entering the infiltration system have been destined for the new organization.

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Status of Logistical Facilities

3. During October the North Vietnamese accelerated and broadened efforts to restore lines of communication in the Panhandle in preparation for the 1970-71 dry season logistics campaign. New road construction also continued at a rapid pace in the western DMZ area, west of Ban Bac, and east of Chavane. By mid-October, pilots were reporting that the major roads stretching from the entry corridors along the North Vietnam border south to the tri-border area had been restored to motorable condition, but no significant vehicular activity was evident. In late October, extensive repair activity and construction of roadside bunkers along Route 23 south of Muong Phine were detected, presaging the opening of the new western north-south supply route in the Panhandle. Also during October, channel guides along the Se Bang Hieng washed away in the heavy August rains were rebuilt, but few supply containers were seen floating downriver from the western DMZ. In addition, photographic reconnaissance during the month revealed a probable extension of the petroleum pipeline leading from North Vietnam around the western

DMZ into the Tchepone area. It showed that the pipeline has been extended from its last known terminus below Tchepone an additional 20 miles southward to Muong Nong. This new segment will permit the North Vietnamese to transport large volumes of petroleum throughout the year from depots in North Vietnam across the border 50 miles into the Laotian Panhandle. Because of the dearth of petroleum in southern Laos and Cambodia and large enemy requirements for petroleum in these areas, the pipeline probably will be extended further south in the future.

4. In the second half of October, most of the recent restoration work by enemy engineers in the Laos Panhandle was damaged by the heavy rains in the wake of the typhoons which struck the northern coast of South Vietnam. Compounding the effects of widespread flooding was the damage inflicted by the Air Force's new interdiction campaign against selected segments on the main cross-border entry routes.* Aerial observations of the enemy's LOCs during the first days of November showed that most of the water crossings in the Panhandle were impassable because of high water and scattered flooding, and the roads evidenced little or no use. Overall, the recent rains and the bombing program have disrupted enemy logistic operations and caused his dry season resupply offensive to be delayed already by at least a month.

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** On 10 October the Air Force began a new saturation bombing program to impede enemy cross-border access into the Panhandle. Four target boxes -- one on each primary entry road -- were programmed for attacks nine times per day by B-52s and tactical aircraft. Since the program began, B-52 strikes have averaged about 25 per day on these target boxes. During the last week of October, 55% of TAC air effort in the Panhandle was directed at the boxes.*

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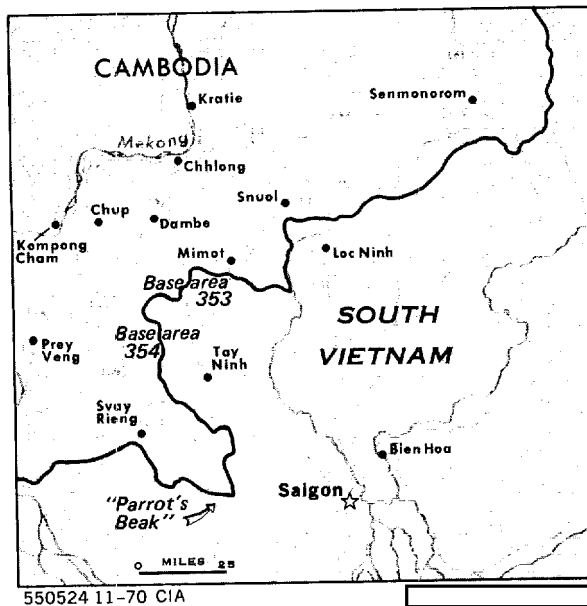
Enhanced Security and Logistics Forces

8. The Communists have increased the number of combat and logistics troops in the Laotian Panhandle, in large part to expand the Laotian supply corridor and to insure its security. Since early May, a total of 20,000 - 25,000 troops in combat units and infiltration groups have arrived in or apparently are moving toward southern Laos. This increases estimated troop strength in southern Laos to at least 70,000 -- a net addition of at least 20,000 over that in the Panhandle last year at this time. Seven combat regiments (or regimental elements) have entered the Panhandle, six from northern South Vietnam and one from North Vietnam. More than 11,000 troops have arrived or are expected to arrive in infiltration groups; most of these probably will be involved in expanding and maintaining the supply system in southern Laos and northeastern Cambodia.

Developments in Northeast Cambodia

9. A number of logistical entities are surfacing in northeast Cambodia in addition to the 470th Transportation Group discussed earlier. However, the overall logistical command and control structure of the Communists is not clear at this time and it may be that the Communists are improvising a logistical support system in Cambodia that will ultimately be reorganized. In the northeast, the B-3 Front Headquarters -- responsible for supplying the western highlands of South Vietnam and parts of northeastern Cambodia -- has long been located in Base Area 702 near where Route 19 enters South Vietnam. One of its subordinates, the 24th NVA Regiment, after moving from southern Laos in August has been located in the Stung Treng area.

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11. Fragmentary reports of new groups and fronts forming in the Parrot's Beak (see the map) and other areas of Cambodia also have been received. One rallier gave information on the "Z-Front," reportedly responsible for the Parrot's Beak area in Cambodia and Communist Military Region 2 in South Vietnam. Rear services activities of the front

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reportedly are coordinated with Headquarters, Communist Military Region 2. In the same area, another rallier provided information on the formation of the 41st Transportation Regiment, reportedly located near Base Area 354. This regiment is supposedly involved in the movement of goods from Chhlong, Dambe, and the Chup Rubber Plantation further south into the Parrot's Beak and Communist Military Region 2. He also indicated that the 82nd Rear Service Group, formerly located near Base Area 353 in South Vietnam, was now operating in the Chhlong area in support of the VC 7th and 9th Divisions. Other ralliers have reported that three new rear services groups recently were formed near Kratie and Chhlong. The 300th Rear Services Group reportedly has control of the east bank of the Mekong between these towns, and the 400th Rear Services Group is located southeast of Kratie along Route 13. The responsibilities of the 500th Rear Services Group have not yet been defined. The relationship between these groups and Group 470 is not yet clear. The area between Kratie and the South Vietnamese border and south to the Parrot's Beak is heavily occupied by VC/NVA troops and includes COSVN headquarters, the headquarters of the 7th and 9th NVA Divisions, and elements of the 1st and 5th NVA Divisions. Controlled sources operating against Route 13 southeast of Kratie often have reported enemy

logistic activity on the road, and FAC and rallier reports indicate Chhlong and Route 75 are key logistic facilities.

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12. Although the enemy is organizing a new logistics corridor, significant supply movements are not yet apparent.

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Further south near Kratie and Chhlong (both served by the Mekong), ralliers and FACs have reported that these towns and related roads and waterways are key VC/NVA logistic facilities. The towns serve as storage and rest centers for the enemy, and Routes 13, 72, 75, and 109 provide access to South Vietnam.

Conclusions and Outlook

13. During the second half of October, Communist dry season supply plans received a sharp setback from the heavy rains which blanketed the Panhandle and an intensified air interdiction effort against the access routes. Both coincided with the planned kickoff phase of the 1970-71 dry season and have already set enemy logisticians back by at least a month. Except for the cross-border roads, which suffered most from the recent storms and which remain under around the clock air attack, the balance of the route structure should recover quickly from the damage caused by the flooding. Access through the entry corridors, however, will be more difficult to achieve, and shuttling activity may be required for some time.

14. Despite the bad weather, the Communists continue preparations to launch a resupply offensive once the roads dry out. During October, they took further steps to prepare Routes 23/16 as a

new western corridor for the movement of supplies through southern Laos into Cambodia and South Vietnam (if it can be secured from Allied harassment). Further south a new logistics entity -- Group 470 -- was implemented and probably is charged with coordinating supply movements between the 559th Transportation Group in Laos and COSVN in Cambodia and South Vietnam. An embryonic logistics structure is now appearing in parts of Cambodia

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15. Although the Communists have been set back in their attempt to get an early start on their dry season supply campaign, they are still in a better position in southern Laos than they were last year at this time, when thousands of logistic personnel were still moving through the Panhandle returning to their area of operations.

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Approved For Release 2006/03/06 : CIA-RDP78T02095R000400030001-2

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